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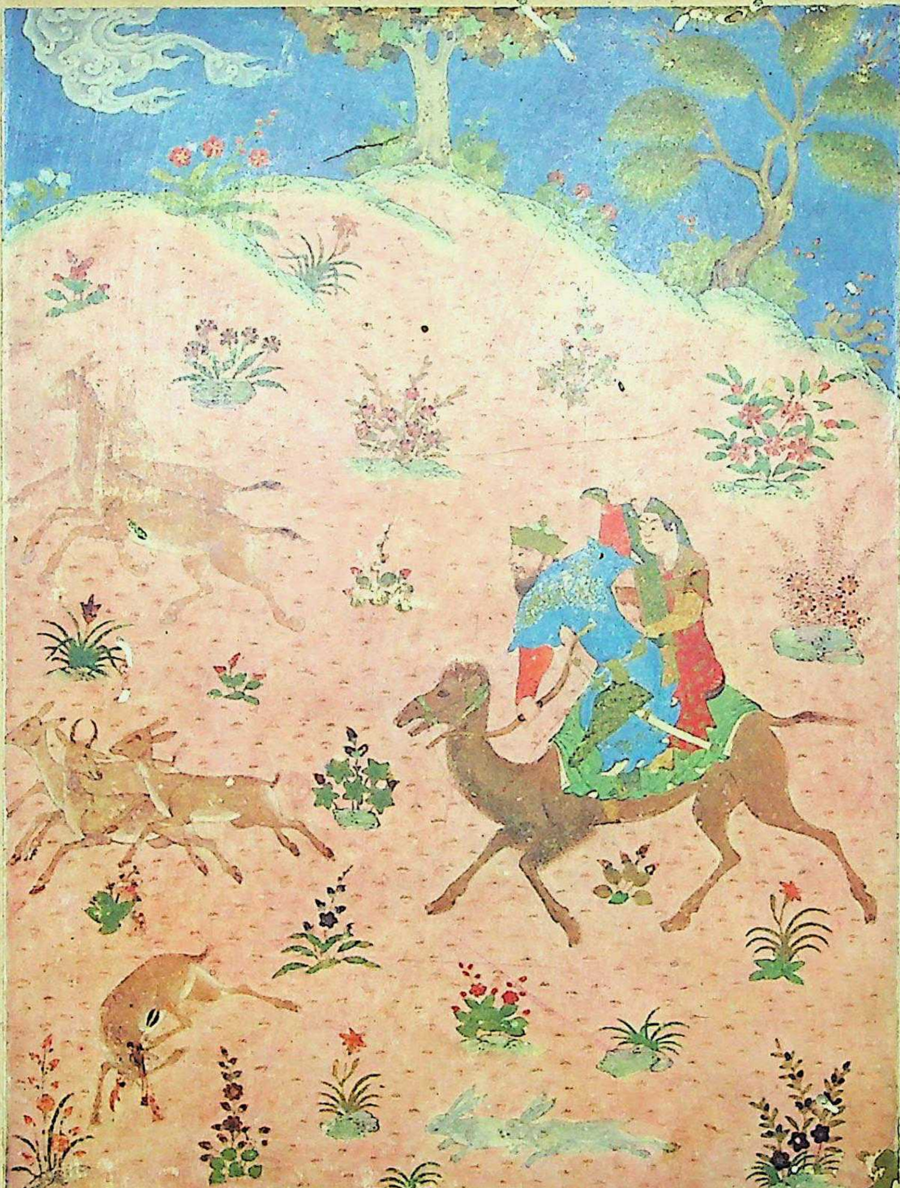
THE BOOK OF THE PERSIAN KINGS



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LAURENCE BINYON & J. V. S. WILKINSON

The SHĀH-NĀMAH *of* FIRDAUSĪ

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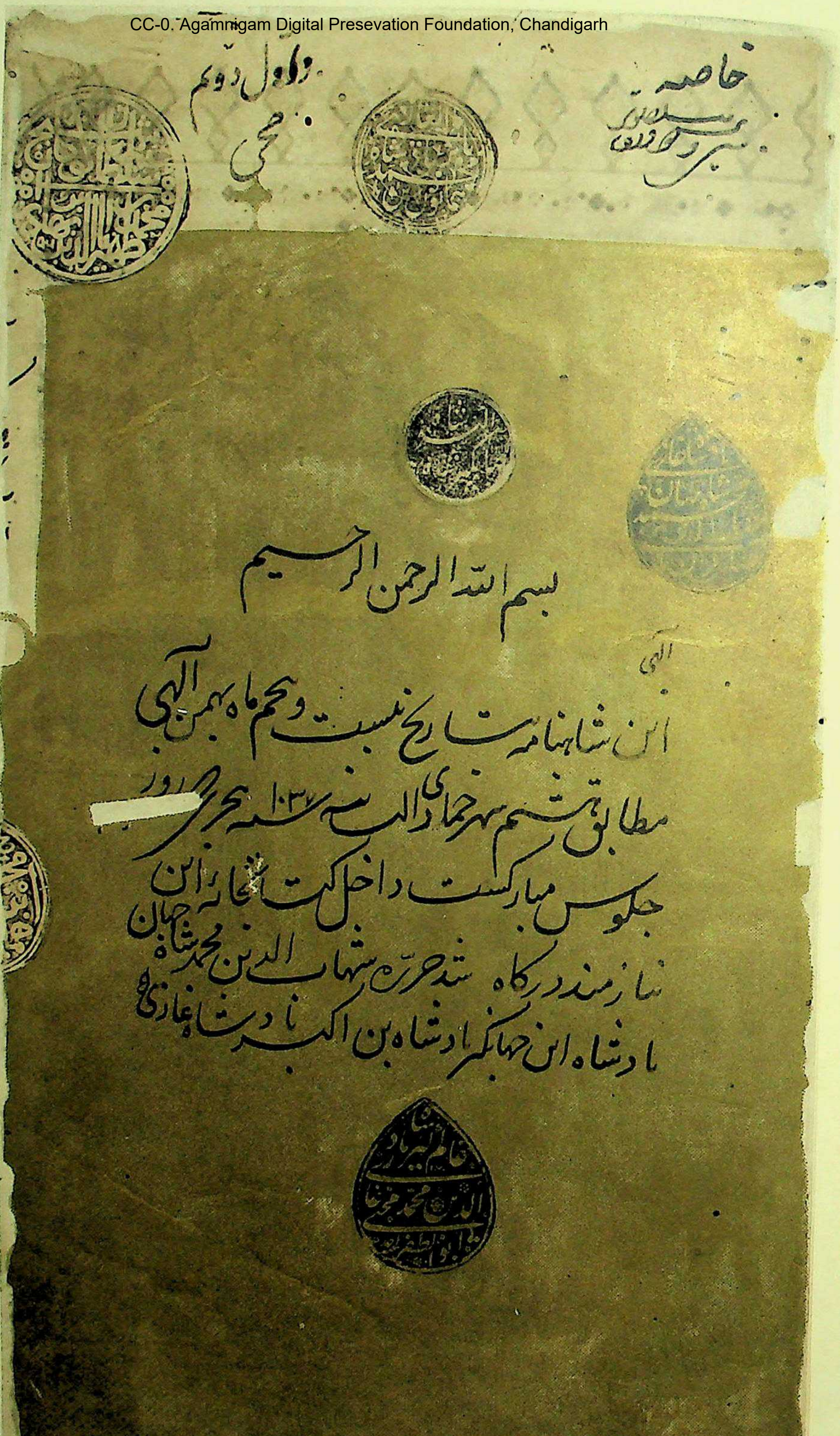

خاصه

و اول دوم

صحی

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

الهی

این شاهنامه بتاریخ بیست و پنجم ماه بهمن الهی
مطابق هشتم شهر جمادی الثانی سنه ۱۰۳۷ هجری روز
جلوس مبارکست داخل کتابخانهٔ این
نیازمند درگاه شد حرره شهاب الدین محمد شاه جهان
بادشاه ابن جهانگیر بادشاه بن اکبر بادشاه غازی

I. THE FLY-LEAF (BEARING THE SEALS OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS)

The SHĀH-NĀMAH *of* FIRDAUSĪ

THE BOOK OF THE PERSIAN KINGS

With 24 *illustrations from a* FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PERSIAN
MANUSCRIPT *in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society*

DESCRIBED BY J. V. S. WILKINSON
WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE PAINTINGS BY
LAURENCE BINYON

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PREFACE

In outlining the structure of Firdausī's great epic, and sketching the principal stories, I have concentrated principally on the subjects of the miniatures in the manuscript with which the following pages are concerned.

Persian painting is mainly an art of decorative book-illustration, and in it, as in most book-miniature painting, narrative power is a necessary part of excellence. The criticism which is restricted to its formal qualities, ignoring drama and meaning, is therefore one-sided, especially if applied to paintings of the mid-fifteenth century, when radiant colour and a newly perfected genius for design are combined with a romantic story-telling gift and a command of epic movement. Never afterwards were the various elements quite so harmoniously balanced as at this moment; for against the greater suavity and sumptuousness of later times must be set a certain loss of forcefulness. Once the peculiar charm of early Timurid painting is seized, the 'high midsummer pomps' of the Safavī period seem a little overpowering. Decoration eclipses drama. But for the appreciation of Timurid painting some understanding of the incidents depicted is essential.

Most of the quotations in verse are taken from the Warners' translation, by kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, & Trübner.

I am under a deep debt of gratitude to the Royal Asiatic Society, who own the manuscript, for allowing the reproductions to be made, and especially to the Secretary, Colonel D. M. F. Hoysted, for his constant help. To Mr. A. G. Ellis and Professor V. Minorsky I am obliged for their assistance in clearing up several points concerning the remarkable history of the manuscript.

J. V. S. WILKINSON.

December, 1930.

CHIEF AUTHORITIES

The texts of Firdausī by TURNER MACAN (Calcutta, 1829), JULES MOHL (Paris, 1838–78), and VÜLLERS and LANDAUER (Leyden, 1877–84).

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INTRODUCTION

As we look back on human history we discover a rhythm of movement, marking the rise and growth, the culmination and decay, not only of peoples and empires, governments and institutions, but of animating ideals and creative efforts embodied in the arts. To certain ages we return with peculiar attraction because to contemplate their creations is to be stirred with an emotion like that of the annual wonder of expanding spring. But these bright waves of resurgence are accompanied elsewhere by movements on the downward slope. When, in the domain of art, we call up the fifteenth century, we are apt to fix our eyes on Italy, and especially on Florence, where in that century was established the great tradition which has formed the main current of European art. But in our own country it is the decay of Gothic art, the sterility of civil war, that meets our gaze.

We have been accustomed to limit our view to Europe. The fifteenth century evokes for most people no associations with other art.

Let us widen the prospect. For this century, of such moment to European art, was also memorable in the arts of Asia. If in India and in China the arts, already so old in their traditions, were living largely on the past, fresh movements were stirring in Japan and in Persia. In Japan there was a real Renaissance, a re-discovery of the Chinese painting of Sung times, and a cluster of great masters found new themes and a new liberation of method. In Persia something different was in progress, but a similar spirit was operating; the movement was forward, and in Persian painting a great stride was made, a truly national style was formed and gradually carried to its greatest achievement.

It is the period of the Timurids, the successors of Tīmūr. Even after the European war, it is scarcely possible, I suppose, for us to conceive of the enormous scale and ferocity of devastation, the massacres of whole populations, the obliteration of cities, which the countries of Asia suffered from conquerors like Chingiz Khān and Tīmūr.

Yet Tīmūr was a great lover of the arts. He would destroy a whole city, but save its best craftsmen, sending them off to work for him in his capital, Samarkand. Tīmūr died in 1405. His son, Shāh Rukh, a munificent patron of art and literature, made his capital at Herat, in the easternmost regions of the empire. The school of Herat is the great school of Persian painting in the fifteenth century. The latter part of the century saw the rise of the most famous of Persian painters, Bihzād, who worked at Herat till, after the fall of the last of the Timurids, he was carried off to Tabriz, early in the succeeding century, by Shāh Ismail, the first of the Safavid dynasty.

The great renown of Bihzād has caused the names of many earlier masters to be forgotten. But in the earlier half of the fifteenth century there were notable painters, who greatly advanced the art. They prepared the way for Bihzād, whose genius is shown rather by the gift for fusing together the diverse elements embedded in pictorial tradition, and by a superior intensity of conception, a more subtle mastery of complex design, than by any innovation.

Early in the fourteenth century the paintings in a magnificent manuscript of the *Shāh-Nāmah*, once belonging to M. Demotte and now dispersed, chiefly among Parisian and American collections, had made a landmark. We see in these paintings the factors of dramatic invention and energetic drawing which Chinese example, under the wave of Mongol influence, had brought into the Persian tradition based on the early Islamic schools of Mesopotamia. But by the end of the century the native genius of Īrān, with its instinct for pure and brilliant colour, its love of the exquisite and sumptuous, its more precious use of materials, has begun to assert itself. The various elements and conventions derived from east and west are being assimilated; the Persian miniature, as we know it in its glory, is being matured.

In the painting of the first half of the fifteenth century we find many miniatures the painters of which are admirable craftsmen who repeat the traditional motives, as their routine, without making any forward step or showing any personal originality. But on the other hand we meet with certain artists of definite personality who are true creators. And these come at a time when the virtuosity of Bihzād had not yet set a standard of harmonious beauty in colour and design which was imitated in a weaker form till character and vigour were submerged in luxurious elegance: a certain simplicity and directness of presentment still prevail.

The manuscript of the *Shāh-Nāmah*, which is the subject of this book, is one of the most notable monuments of the period. The miniatures, it is plain, are not all by one hand; and though it is hazardous to attempt to assign the paintings in manuscripts to particular authors, since they were apt to conform to a certain manner with remarkable docility, some of the pages seem to stand out among the rest with a personal quality of their own, while others show the conservative craftsman at work. To me it seems that the painters of the Visit of Tahmīnah to Rustam (Plate 5), of the Ordeal by Fire (Plate 6), of the Paladins lost in the Snow (Plate 13), of the Death of Zarāsp (Plate 8), and of the great Battle-scene (Plate 22) are those who count for most, who are carrying forward the tradition to that point at which Bihzād is to step upon the scene. Perhaps one should add to these the painters of the miniatures reproduced on Plate 14 and Plate 16. Yet as one goes through the whole manuscript one is so fascinated by the strange and exquisite colouring, that the pages exhibiting a weaker drawing and a dependence on routine seem almost equally enchanting.

The whole work is saturated in romantic atmosphere. Where in all art shall we find anything more romantic than some of these duels of warriors, or the fabulous castle towering on sheer crags of fantastic colour, or the coral-like mass of desolate rock with its bare and twisted shrubs on which the dragon meets his death?

Romance, with us in Europe, is oftenest an escape from reality. But Persian art is romantic in essence. There is no severe 'classic' tradition to revolt against, there is no realism to fly to when the pleasures of a day-dream cloy.

We note in these, as more or less in all Persian paintings, the artists' almost voluptuous enjoyment of the glory of the visible world. The pleasure of the eye and the decorative instinct are so strong that, however dramatic the motive, whatever crisis be the theme, they refuse to sacrifice or suppress one detail of the chosen beauties of the setting in order to concentrate on the action of the figures. At least, that is the prevailing tendency. But at this period, in the fifteenth century, this tendency had not become so powerful as with the succeeding school, under the Safavids; in the finest of these designs we find, with all the elaboration of lovely detail, an impressive presentation of the subject.

But let us look at the pictures in turn.

PLATE 2. *The meeting of Firdausī with the three court poets of Mahmūd of Ghazna.*

The scene is a garden in spring time, with a stream flowing down the slope of the hill-side on which the group of poets is seated. The first thing that we note is the peculiar Persian arrangement of the elements of the scene, and in especial the convention by which the horizon is hidden by the rising ridges of the hill. How this convention arose, we need not discuss; but it evidently was a foundation for picture-making which made a particular appeal to the Persian artists, for it gave them the opportunity of communicating their vivid delight in the beauty of form in tree and leaf, the beauty of colour in flowers, enhanced by the intense blue of the sky. Again and again in Persian painting this motive is repeated. In no other art is so poignant an evocation of the glory of the spring and the sunshine. And perhaps in no other art is there so precious a use of the materials of the paints; the pigments are of the finest, the paper of an almost voluptuous smoothness.

This convention was used also with another intention; that of suggesting, by means of figures whose faces or busts alone appear above the sky-line, or in battle-scenes by means of trumpets and banners, a much larger scene than is actually presented to the eyes. Of this we shall find many examples in the manuscript. Allied to this device of the elevated ridge against the sky is the convention, taken from Chinese painting, of imagining the spectator to be placed at a point of vantage above what is represented. He looks down, not from such a height as is usually connoted by the term 'bird's-eye view', but from one considerably raised, so that figures and objects on different planes can be disposed without confusion.

Next, we may note the disposition of the trees, blossoming shrubs, and flowers, all arranged for a decorative effect. This is in order that the eye may enjoy to the full the separate beauty of each. For the same purpose the flowers are greatly magnified. This art is the antithesis of Western impressionism. The painter takes the most delightful things in nature, places them where he pleases, enlarges them at will, and composes an arbitrary whole. Our conscientious submission to facts would seem to him quite irrelevant to art.

Finally, there occurs here what is often found in Persian miniatures, an overflow of the design beyond the borders of the frame. It has sometimes been assumed that the miniatures, separately painted, were cut down to fit the page; but this is not the case; it seems rather to be a deliberate exuberance which, once indulged in, became a fashion.

PLATE 3. *The child Zāl restored by the Sīmurgh to his father.*

This is one of the more archaic paintings in the manuscript. We have the rising hill-slope with immensely magnified flowers against an intensely blue sky; but the whole slope is covered with tufts of grass regularly arranged and diversified with the larger tufts of flowering plants. This carpet-like pattern, so orderly in its disposition, contrasts incongruously with the fantastic mass of rocks at the left. This strange agglomeration of wrinkled and haphazard excrescences, their strangeness emphasized by the variety of vivid colour they display, is a convention that occurs in a number of these miniatures, and in other manuscripts of the period.

PLATE 4. *The youthful Rustam killing the elephant.*

This painting seems to be by the same hand as the last; one of the less gifted of these illustrators, who follows old conventions without any new ideas of his own; his figures are drawn rather clumsily and without grace. Yet the charm of the colouring prevails over these defects.

PLATE 5. *The Meeting of Rustam and Tahmīnah.*

Here we meet a different artist; this time it is a master. There is far more life in the figure-drawing. There are no incongruous elements, due to a thoughtless following of tradition, and a corresponding gain in unity. Rich though the colour-effect is, it is simply massed. There is a spaciousness and dignity in the design, emphasized by the repeated uprights, unusual in the Persian miniature. It has the qualities of a painting on a large scale. The group of the slave holding up the curtain and the entering princess is of a moving beauty. The tall and stately form of Tahmīnah, with her head inclined, is typical of some of the most beautiful paintings of the early fifteenth century. We are reminded of the women in the drawings to the poems of Sultan Ahmad Jalair, published by Dr. F. R. Martin in 1926, and in a little manuscript of Hafiz in the Chester Beatty collection. This certainly is one of the finest paintings in the book.

PLATE 6. *Siyāvush undergoes the ordeal by fire.*

Possibly by the same master as the last subject. There is the same absence of teasing detail, the same largeness and simplicity in an upright design. There is a fourteenth-century illustration of this incident in the British Museum Print Room; and a comparison with this miniature will show the immense advance that Persian painting had made in the interval. There, spectators are grouped close about the fire, with mild gestures of astonishment; the figures are seen on the level. Here a dream-like impression of solitude and silence, as well as of breathless crisis is conveyed. The isolation which must be the condition of heroic effort is suggested by pictorial means. How still and apart are the spring trees upon the hill!

PLATE 7. *The murder of Siyāvush.*

This may be by the same hand as that which painted the miniature reproduced on Plate 3.

PLATE 8. *Zarāsp killed by Farūd.*

The conventions of Persian painting lend themselves to dramatic effect. Scene-designers might find many fruitful hints for the theatre in the pages of these manuscripts. The upward movement of Zarāsp on his horse, mounting the steep rock, is suddenly stopped dead, as the arrow strikes and he topples over in the saddle. The warriors emerging into sight on the right and helmeted heads of the soldiers just appearing below suggest a whole army. There is still something clumsy in the unmanageable mass of rock at the left; but the artist has grasped, if not quite mastered, a very original and strong design, on a diagonal basis.

PLATE 9. *Ruhhām cuts off the hand of the sorcerer.*

One of the more archaic designs. The pyramid of rocks is like a mass of coral. Ingenuous in some respects, the artist has known how to use the traditional conventions, especially the pennons of the unseen troop behind the ridge, to excellent effect. Again, the delicate, incandescent colour carries off all weakness of design.

PLATE 10. *Rustam pulls the Khān of Chīn from his elephant.*

Notable chiefly for the invention of the splendid group of horsemen in the foreground set in sudden movement. This is the making of the design.

PLATE 11. *Bīzhan rescued by Rustam from the dungeon.*

This is a night-scene, but, as is usual in Asiatic art, no tiresome subservience to nature prevents us from seeing every detail in full light. That it is night, is made plain by the stars crowding the sky and the young moon. Similarly, the artist feels that we want to know how Bīzhan looks in his dungeon, so he removes a piece of the ground to disclose him. In spite of this defiance of realism, the feeling of night and cold is somehow conveyed. The rocks and trees against the sky are more fantastic than ever. One thinks of strange growths under the sea. The face of the prisoner seems to have been retouched by an Indian hand.

PLATE 12. *The Siege of Gang-Bihisht.*

Perhaps by the same artist as the last two pictures. The rectangular forms of the city-walls and houses, the engine of war in the foreground, give the design a squareness of structure unusual in Persian painting, which often delights in a sort of circular composition in sweeping curves without angles or straight lines. The silhouettes of the warriors in the foreground are not as energetic as they might be: contrast the rather wooden horses with the movement of the horse of Siyāvush (Plate 6). The painter takes more delight in the ornamentation of the city-gate and in the beautifully leaping flames of the naphtha fire kindled in front of it.

PLATE 13. *The Paladins in the Snow.*

I should be inclined to attribute this to the painter of the Visit of Tahmīnah to Rustam (Plate 5). The choice of subject is unusual. Snow is very rarely depicted by the Persian painters, who have so great a passion for the splendour of the spring. There is something very moving in this picture of the little group of Paladins, lost in the mountains and halted by an icy spring, into the dark waters of which they look as they talk of Kai Khusrau and his great deeds, while the clouds gather curdling above them and the snow begins. The last remnants of sky seen in glimpses between the rocks and the snow-clouds serve to emphasize the imminence of the storm, and the pressure of silent forces closing in on the lost group. A touch of realism tells with immense effect in a romantic story; and here there is a kind of homeliness in the picture of the men with their servants and their horses eating from nose-bags which refreshes after so many fantastic and heroic incidents.

PLATE 14. *Gushtāsp slaying the Dragon.*

Here again, as in the last miniature, we seem in some remoteness at the end of the world. A singular impression of solitude is created by the pink wall of corrugated rock rearing its jagged ridges and two naked trees against the bright blue sky. The fantastic dragon seems native to such a scene, and the adventure of the paladin seems all the more tremendous from the desolation of the surroundings.

PLATE 15. *Gushtāsp playing polo.*

Polo is a very favourite subject in Persian art, and the game is depicted here with great animation. M. Blochet has suggested (or rather asserted) that the gold skies of which the Persian painters were fond, are derived from early Italian pictures. But if a gold ground was used by Chinese and Japanese painters, why should the notion not have occurred to the Persians?

PLATE 16. *Arjāsp slain in his Iron Fortress by Isfandiyār.*

A fascinating design. The artist lifts the spectator up as on an eagle's flight to look down on the courtyard of the fortress-palace, with its battlemented walls built on soaring jade-green and lavender-tinted crags. The abolition of the foreground adds enormously to the sense of altitude and remoteness.

PLATE 17. *The first fight between Rustam and Isfandiyār.*

Without the colour—the pale green ground, and the gold clouds in the sky—the landscape has an almost ghostly effect, steeped in stillness, which enhances the violence of the action.

PLATE 18. *Rustam kills Isfandiyār.*

Probably by the same hand as the last.

PLATE 19. *Alexander supports the dying Darius.*

A good example of the typical Persian treatment of such scenes, when it is desired to suggest the presence of an army. The pale brick-red of the ground contrasts with the deep blue of the sky, against which rises a tree with mauve blossoms.

PLATE 20. *Bahrām, with Āzādah, on a camel, hunting the deer.*

This is the famous incident of Bahrām's pinning the deer's hind hoof to its ear with an arrow at Āzādah's request. Illustrations of this scene begin on Sasanian metal-work and continue through the whole course of Persian art. In later paintings it is a wild ass, not a deer, which is shot. Bahrām sometimes rides a horse; and his costume is always that of the artist's own time.

PLATE 21. *The escape of Qubād by night, escorted by Rizmihr.*

Note how every brick and coloured tile is meticulously painted, although this is a night-scene.

PLATE 22. *Battle between Gav and Talhand.*

A very remarkable composition, crowded with the liveliest incident and violent action, yet not confused. The horses are more elegant, their motion more naturally rendered, than in most of the miniatures. The sky is gold, the hill green, the rocks of many pale tints. With the scattered gleams of scarlet, gold, and blue in dresses and banners, a scintillating effect is produced. This is the kind of picture which Akbar's painters in Delhi may have taken for their model in similar battle-scenes.

PLATE 23. *Fight between Bahrām Chūbīn and Khusrau Parvīz.*

Bahrām's elephant is brought down, but he fights on foot undismayed. The design is ingeniously arranged to bring out the indomitable defiance of the isolated warrior to the charging mass of horsemen. The sky is a pale, not a deep, blue.

PLATE 24. *Yazdigird, last of the Sasanian kings, takes shelter in a mill and is searched for by soldiers.*

This painting may have been left unfinished, for it was certainly completed in India. The landscape is in the smaller style of the early Mughal school, and is quite unlike the true Persian manner, with its arbitrary but spacious conventions. One cannot help deploring this, for the episode is a great Persian tragedy, the end of the Sasanian dynasty and the triumph of the Arabs. One would wish it to have been depicted wholly in Persian style.

Many of these scenes are of battle and bloodshed: but all takes place in a fairy-world, where everything is radiantly clear and lustrous. The reader should be warned that some of these designs without the colour are mere spectres of themselves: and it is quite impossible in words to convey the extraordinary exhilaration which the colour communicates, or its delightful strangeness. The colour-plates must give a clue to the rest.

LAURENCE BINYON.

I. THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS HISTORY

A FEW Persian seals on the gold fly-leaf, a short note in a bold, imperial handwriting, a gold inscription on a banner in one of the illustrations: these are the only written indications which the manuscript contains of its history before the nineteenth century.

Yet the names of the owners are among the most notable in the annals of Asia, and that on the banner belonged to Tamerlane's grandson, of whose tragic life and death some particulars have been handed down by the historians.

The book has witnessed, at close quarters, the prosperity and dissolution of Tīmūr's mighty empire; the varying fortunes of Tīmūr's descendant, the heroic Bābur, culminating in the establishment of a second great Timurid Empire in India; Humāyūn's chequered career; the rise of the Mughal dynasty to unparalleled power and splendour under Akbar the Great, his son Jahāngīr, and his grandson Shāh Jahān the Magnificent; till finally the inevitable decline set in once again in the reign of the austere Aurangzeb, the last of the Grand Mughals.

But this is not all. Our manuscript has seen Herat when it was the capital of the Timurid Empire, and the centre of the Timurid art renaissance under Tīmūr's son, Shāh Rukh, while, half a century later, it may have known the same capital at an even more brilliant epoch, when, under another celebrated Timurid prince, Sultān Husain Mīrzā, its architectural and artistic glories, and the brilliant circle of savants, poets, and artists who adorned his court, made it the wonder of Asia. That Prince himself, and his friend and minister, ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, may have handled it, and the illustrious painter, Bihzād, caught inspiration from its glowing colours, before Bābur carried it off across the mountains, to take it with him, in his descent from Kabul to the plains, on the way to the conquest of India.

While, however, it cannot be said for certain how the manuscript came into Bābur's possession, or exactly how and when it was transferred from Herat to India, it is clear enough from the seals and notes that it remained in the Imperial library of the Mughal Emperors, from father to son, for six generations or more, and for a period of at least a century and a half. The over-painting of several of the miniatures, moreover, and the style in which the additions are made, prove that at the beginning of the seventeenth century the manuscript was seen and studied by the Court painters of India, to whom, doubtless, it served as a model.

In Plate 18, which illustrates the shooting of Isfandiyār by the rival hero Rustam, an inscription may be discerned on the banner to the left of the illustration. This reads as follows: *al-Sulṭān al-aʿẓam Muḥammad Jūḵī* 'the mighty Sultan, Muhammad Jūkī'. Now there were two Timurid princes of this name. The first was the son of

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Shāh Rukh, son and successor of Tīmūr; he died in 848 of the Hijri era, corresponding to A.D. 1445. The second was the son of Mīrzā ʻAbd al-Latīf, and was a grand-nephew of the first. The date of his death was twenty years later than that of his uncle. Both were buried in the famous Musallā at Herat, with other members of their house. An account of the tombs and their inscriptions is to be found in the *Journal Asiatique*, tom. xv, of June, 1860, in a letter from M. Khanikoff.

The inscription on the banner might refer to the younger of these two princes, whose father, ʻAbd al-Latīf, actually held the throne for a few months after murdering Ulugh Beg, the son and successor of Shāh Rukh, in 1450, but it is rather more probable that the title of *al-Sulṭān al-Aʻẓam* indicates the son of the Great Shāh Rukh than the younger Muhammad Jūkī. Moreover, though it is unwise to be dogmatic on questions of dating, the paintings seem to be earlier than the middle of the century. M. Vever, for instance, has a manuscript containing the works of Khvājū of Kirman, bearing the date of 841 A.H. (A.D. 1438) which contains, among its illustrations, several which in colour and drawing have striking points of resemblance with those in this manuscript.

Of the elder of these princes, and the manner of his death, there is a suggestive passage in the *Habīb al-Siyar*[1] (completed in 1523), by the historian Khvāndamīr, of which the following is an abridged translation, pruned of some redundancies.

ʻMīrzā Muhammad Jūkī was the younger son of the Emperor. He bore on his forehead the marks of manly courage, and the lights of hardihood and wisdom. His aim was sure, and the sword of his vengeance unerring. The Prince served his father assiduously and received from him all that was needful, but the Lady Gauhar Shād [wife of Shāh Rukh] was hostile to him and was continually imputing evil intentions to him; so inevitably the Pādishāh withdrew the Prince from all share in the affairs of the realm; although his nephews, Mīrzā ʻAlā al-Daulah and Mīrzā ʻAbd al-Latīf, received great preferment. From this cause a host of sorrows attacked the Prince, and he fell a prey to sickness. Yet his high spirit refused to be cast down, and he used to travel continually round the regions of Khurasan, being carried in a litter; till, in the year 848 A.H., when he was in the vicinity of Sarakhs, the bird of his soul took flight from its corporeal cage, and went to join the nightingales of Paradise. The Khāqān [Shāh Rukh] was sorely afflicted at the news, but at last he resigned himself to the will of God. The body was brought to Herat and was buried in the Madrasah of Gauhar Shād, next to his brother Mīrzā Baisunqur. By the Khāqān's order his fief was divided between his two sons.'

The story has a somewhat sinister sound, and it is possible, one suspects, that

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[1] Part III, vol. iii, p. 137.

Gauhar Shād, a remarkable and strong-willed character, did not confine her malignant activities to poisoning Shāh Rukh's mind against his son.

That Muhammad Jūkī, like many of his family, had literary and artistic tastes is probable, and the name of at least one poet is known who is said to have written all his verses in his honour.[1]

The Prince had previously been Governor of Garmsir, a province to the south of Herat, and of Khuttal, north of the Oxus.

It is likely then, though not certain, that the manuscript of the *Shāh-Nāmah* was written and illustrated before this Prince's death; though the illustrations may not all be of the same date. It is indeed fairly obvious that more than one artist was employed. While it cannot be positively proved that it was written for 'Muhammad Jūkī' at all, there cannot be much doubt of this. A name in an inscription on a banner or over a gateway more often than not denotes the patron.

To come now to the fly-leaf, which is reproduced in Plate 1. The large round seal on the left hand, near the top, is that of Bābur (born 1483, first invaded India 1519, reigned 1526–30). It bears the date 96, standing for 906, which corresponds to the year 1500–1, in which Bābur, then barely eighteen, gained the throne of Samarqand—to lose it in the following year to the Uzbeg Shaibānī Khān.[2] That to the right is Humāyūn's (1530–40 and 1555–6), while underneath is that of Jahāngīr (1605–27). The pear-shaped seal on the right is that of Shāh Jahān (1627–58) and that at the bottom of the page is Aurangzeb's (1658–1706). Both the last two bear the dates of accession. The portion of the round seal on the left is usually supposed to be Akbar's, but it would appear to be Humāyūn's, though it is of a different pattern from the other seal of this Emperor, mentioned above.

Shāh Jahān's inscription reads as follows:

> *This Shāh-Nāmah has been entered in the private library of this suppliant at the court of God on the 25th day of the month Bahman, corresponding to the 6th day of the month Jumādā II, in the year 1037 Hijrī, which is the date of my blessed accession. Written by Shihāb al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh Jahān Pādishāh, son of Jahāngīr Pādishāh, son of Akbar Pādishāh Ghāzī.*

In the corner of one of the fly-leaves is a short Persian note of presentation, written apparently by Nawwāb Sālār Jang. One Sālār Jang was the brother, or cousin, of the Bahu Begam of Oudh, who figures in a famous episode in Warren Hastings's career, and who was a daughter of Nawwāb Muhammad Ishāq Khān Bahādur Shūstarī, a great favourite of the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Shāh. Perhaps Muhammad Shāh gave the manuscript to his favourite, who passed it to Sālār Jang, who gave it to one of the Doyles. Sālār Jang died in 1786 or 1787. Charles Joseph Doyle came of a distinguished military family. He was a Peninsular veteran, and was later on Military Secretary to the Marquess of Hastings, Governor-General of India. He was subsequently Governor of Granada. In 1834 he presented this manuscript to the Royal Asiatic Society with a number of other manuscripts, books, maps, and drawings. He was born in 1787, and died in London in 1848, having attained the rank of Major-General.

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[1] Mir 'Alī. See Ethé, *India Office Catalogue*, column 346.

[2] The date on the seal of course merely shows when the seal was made. The most probable date for the book coming into Bābur's possession was his visit to Herat, some six years later, of which he has left a vivid account in his memoirs.

The manuscript consists of five hundred and thirty-six folios, measuring 13¼ by 8¾ inches. The written surface measures 9 by 5¼ inches. The text is written in four columns in a beautiful Nasta'līq handwriting, the characteristic Persian script, with an average of 46 couplets to a page. There are thus something under 50,000 couplets in this version, which includes also the well-known prose preface by Prince Baisunqur, of which, unfortunately, the end portion is missing. The pages are of an agreeable pale-brown tint. The margins are later, and of a lighter tone. It seems unlikely that the original margins were ever profusely ornamented.

There are two *sarlauhs,* or chapter headings, of great beauty. The first of these, at the beginning of the prose preface, has been seriously damaged, but the second, which occurs at the opening of the reign of Luhrāsp, is in perfect condition. It is a magnificent specimen of the illuminator's art, unsurpassed in its colouring and in the beauty of its intricate geometrical and floral patterns. Besides the usual gold and blue, several other colours have been introduced, among them a wonderful peacock green, as well as black, for which the Herat illuminators had a special fondness.

The end of the manuscript has been lost and there is therefore no colophon. The exact date, the place of writing, and the scribe's name are accordingly unknown.

II. THE *SHĀH-NĀMAH* AND ITS AUTHOR

FROM its majestic breadth and range, from the sonorous sweep of its language, from its significance as the embodiment of the whole national legend of an ancient and imaginative race, the *Shāh-Nāmah* of Firdausī ranks unquestionably among the great epics of the world. It is inspired by a deep sense of the greatness of Providence and the impermanence of mortal things. The real theme, indeed, is the unending conflict, behind the scenes of fighting and feasting, knight-errantry and romance, between the powers of Good and Evil,[1] a conflict which is emphasized by the habitual use of the language of the old Zoroastrian faith, rather than that of orthodox Islam. Elevation of theme, the dramatic interest and pathos of the stories, the weird glimpses of strange and terrible things, the author's love of beauty and valour and strength—these are a few only of the qualities in the *Shāh-Nāmah* that account for its extraordinary popularity among Persians for nine hundred years—a popularity that has not faded yet—and for the almost unanimous admiration of the West.

Yet it has had its critics, some of whom are troubled with its stock similes and immense length, and consider that its sounding magnificence conceals serious defects. That it is loosely constructed cannot be denied, nor that its length—60,000 couplets as stated by Firdausī, and little short of that in many existing versions—makes it difficult to master, but of its nobility and interest there can be no dispute. Each page is a store-house of ancient folk-lore, and the beat of the national pride is heard in every line.

The metre of the poem is the well-known *Mutaqārib*, in which each hemistich is of the form— ◡ – – | ◡ – – | ◡ – – | ◡ –,

which is approximately the same as in Wordsworth's—

> She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
> The mist and the river, the hill and the shade.

Of course one must allow for the difference between the strict quantitative rules of Persian scansion, which resemble those of Greek and Latin, and the accentual system of our language. Moreover, the English lines tend to break into the gallop of 'Lochinvar' or 'How they brought the good news'; and it is as well to quote the opening lines of the Persian.

Binām ī khudāvand i jān ū khirad
Kazīn bartar andīsha bar nagzurad
Khudāvand i nām ū Khudāvand i jā
Khudāvand i rūzī-dih ī rah-numā.

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[1] Ahura Mazda and Āhriman.

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Firdausī, or, to give him his real name, Abū'l-Qāsim Mansūr, was born about the year A.D. 935 or perhaps rather earlier near Tūs, close to Mashhad in north-east Persia. He came of a family of small landed proprietors (Dihqān), a class of sturdy patriots, naturally interested in their country, who were the chief repositories of the traditions and legends of old Persia. Court annals had been kept from very early days, probably down to late Sasanian times, and under the last Sasanian king before the Muhammadan conquest, one Dānishvar, a member like Firdausī of the Dihqān class, made a Pahlavī selection, in prose, from the accumulated materials. Then, in the second part of the tenth century, a gifted young fellow-townsman of Firdausī, named Daqīqī, undertook the task of making a great epic out of the national annals. When, however, he had completed 1,000 couplets he was assassinated by one of his favourite slaves. Daqīqī's original verses have been incorporated by Firdausī into his poem. But he had other sources also, notably a Persian prose version of Dānishvar's compilation, and there was in addition a certain amount of other chronicle literature available, both in Persian and in Arabic translations from Pahlavī chronicles. From what remains of the various sources it can be proved that Firdausī was remarkably faithful to them.

Firdausī was about forty years old at the time of Daqīqī's death, and, as he tells us, when he heard of it he was fired with ambition to tell the story in his own words, a task for which, from his tastes, talents, and previous studies, he was uniquely fitted. Yet he had to face disappointments and difficulties, among others the problem of finding a patron, and he had reached the age of sixty-five before his poem was completed. Then in A.D. 999 he dedicated the finished work to one Ahmad b. Muhammad of Khālanjān.

But at this very time the ideal patron came into view, for it was in 998 that the mighty Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazna, 'Allah-breathing Lord', succeeded to his throne. Mahmūd's name still lives as one of the ablest, though one of the most bigoted, warriors of Islam. As the conqueror and fanatical iconoclast of India, as the ruler of an empire that stretched from Bukhara to Gujarat, and as an enthusiastic patron of learning, Sultan Mahmūd was far the most notable monarch of his time, and his Court was the greatest of the several centres of the Persian cultural revival that grew with the decay of the power of the Abbasid Caliphs. It was an age of intellectual and scientific giants, of great names in every branch of learning, among which those of Al-Birūnī, who resided for many years at the Court of Ghazna, and of Avicenna, who succeeded in evading Mahmūd's persistent efforts to secure his presence, are the best known in Europe. But it was for its galaxy of poetical talent that Ghazna was chiefly famous, partly no doubt because the Sultan himself was some sort of a poet, and it was to Ghazna therefore that Firdausī, the greatest of them all, naturally turned for assistance. The entertaining story of his first introduction to the circle of learned men will be told later. There is unfortunately reason to suspect its genuineness, but whether it is true or not, it is clear that Firdausī came to the Court, where he thought that the result of his long labours had the best chance of being appreciated, as an adventurer who had yet to make his name. To the Sultan he addressed a lavish panegyric, and eventually gained his interest and patronage. At Ghazna, then, he worked for years at the second edition of his poem, in a room, it is said, of which the walls were adorned by the Sultan for his benefit with inspiring portraits and battle-scenes, showing the ancient kings and heroes of Īrān and Tūrān, with their horses and armour.

Gibbon, who was fascinated by Mahmūd's achievements, went too far in his remark that 'Avarice was the only defect that tarnished the illustrious character of Mahmūd'. Mahmūd's character had more blemishes than one, and the tale of his avarice includes some stories of remarkable meanness, especially towards the poets whose presence at his Court he was so anxious to secure. So, after undertaking to give Firdausī a gold piece, so it is said, for every couplet he composed, he eventually, influenced perhaps by accusations of unorthodoxy which the poet's enemies brought against him, allowed him only a fraction of what he had promised. Firdausī in bitter disappointment went to the bath, and on coming out gave the whole reward to the bath-man and a sherbet-seller, and then fled from Ghazna to escape the Sultan's natural wrath. Mahmūd indeed is said to have issued orders that he should be trampled to death by elephants. The poet then wrote a vitriolic satire, of which the point lay in its reflection that a monarch of slave lineage—for this Mahmūd was—could not be expected to behave like a gentleman.

Ultimately, after years of distracted poverty, the old poet was induced to delete the whole satire, though a version of it is still in existence.

Mahmūd, too, at last repented of his conduct, and ordered that 60,000 *dīnārs*' worth of indigo should be given to Firdausī with his apologies. But it was too late, for as the camels bearing the gift entered the Rūdbār Gate of Tābarān,[1] the corpse of Firdausī was borne out from the Gate of Razān.

At the time, the account goes on to tell, there was in Tābarān a fanatical preacher, who announced that as the poet had been a heretic his body should not be buried in the Muhammadan cemetery, so they buried him in a garden belonging to Firdausī outside the Gate.

Firdausī left a daughter, who was a woman of a proud spirit. When the King's gift was offered to her, she refused to accept it. Mahmūd, on being told of this, expelled the preacher from Tābarān as a punishment, and ordered that the money should be expended on the repair of a rest-house.

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[1] Part of the city of Tūs.

Firdausī was about ninety years old at the time of his death, the actual occasion of which is said to have been his hearing a child's voice in the market-place reciting his satire against Mahmūd. The bitter consciousness of the contrast between the hopeful spirit of youth and the disappointment of his frustrated old age is expressed in one of his lyrics, of which the two last lines read like his dying words:

My boyhood once again in dreams I see;
Alas for thee, my Youth, alas for thee!

Such, in outline, is the story of Firdausī's tragic life and death, partly, at least, disentangled from the picturesque additions of later times. Some of the circumstances, such as the story of the reward arriving just too late, sound a little suspicious, but this particular story seems to have obtained general credence fairly soon after Firdausī's death.

III. THE PREFACE TO THE POEM

THE biography of Firdausī that is prefixed to the text of the manuscript was compiled four hundred years after the poet's death, by order of Baisunqur Khān, son of the Emperor Shāh Rukh, and brother of that Muhammad Jūkī for whom this particular manuscript was probably prepared.

Baisunqur was the most cultured of all Tīmūr's descendants, an enthusiastic patron of poets and painters, and the founder of a great 'Academy of the Book' at Herat which was undoubtedly responsible for the wonderful flowering-time of the book arts which immediately followed; our manuscript is itself one of the rare products of the short period of discipline, ordered by fine taste, during which this gifted young prince was the controller and arbiter of the arts.[1] Baisunqur is an important person in the literary history of the Persian epic, for it is his edition of the *Shāh-Nāmah* that is the basis of most of the later texts. Further, most accounts of Firdausī's life are taken from his Preface, and though many of the lively stories which this contains are certainly fictitious, they are interesting evidence of the poet's fame in the four centuries that followed his death.

The only one of these stories which concerns us—for it provides the subject for the first illustration—is the following. (Unfortunately it is not found in the earliest account of Firdausī's life.)

Sultan Mahmūd had shown great interest in the project of versifying the national story of Persia, and 'Unsurī, one of the leading court poets, was giving an entertainment in a garden near the city of Ghazna to two of his brother poets, to celebrate his triumph in a recent competition in epic verse. The three were sitting and making merry, with a youthful companion apiece, when Firdausī, dressed in travel-stained garments, happened to enter the garden, and, after praying, wished to join them. The others did not wish to be interrupted, but while two of them proposed to drive him away by insults, the third—'Unsurī himself—thought of a politer way of getting rid of him. They told him that they were court poets, who had retired to the garden for privacy, and that they admitted only poets to their society. Firdausī, however, said that he too was a poet, whereupon they proposed an extempore rhyming contest. For this they had chosen a rhyme for which they felt confident that Firdausī would not be able to find a suitable ending.

'Unsurī's line was:

> The moon is surpassed by the brightness of thy cheek—

Farrukhī's second line continued:

> No rose in the garden can compare with thy beauty—

---

[1] He died in 1433, aged 37, of drink, the family vice.

'Asjadī's third was:

> The darts from thy eyelash pierce the warrior's cuirass (*jūshan*)—

But Firdausī at once completed the quatrain with:

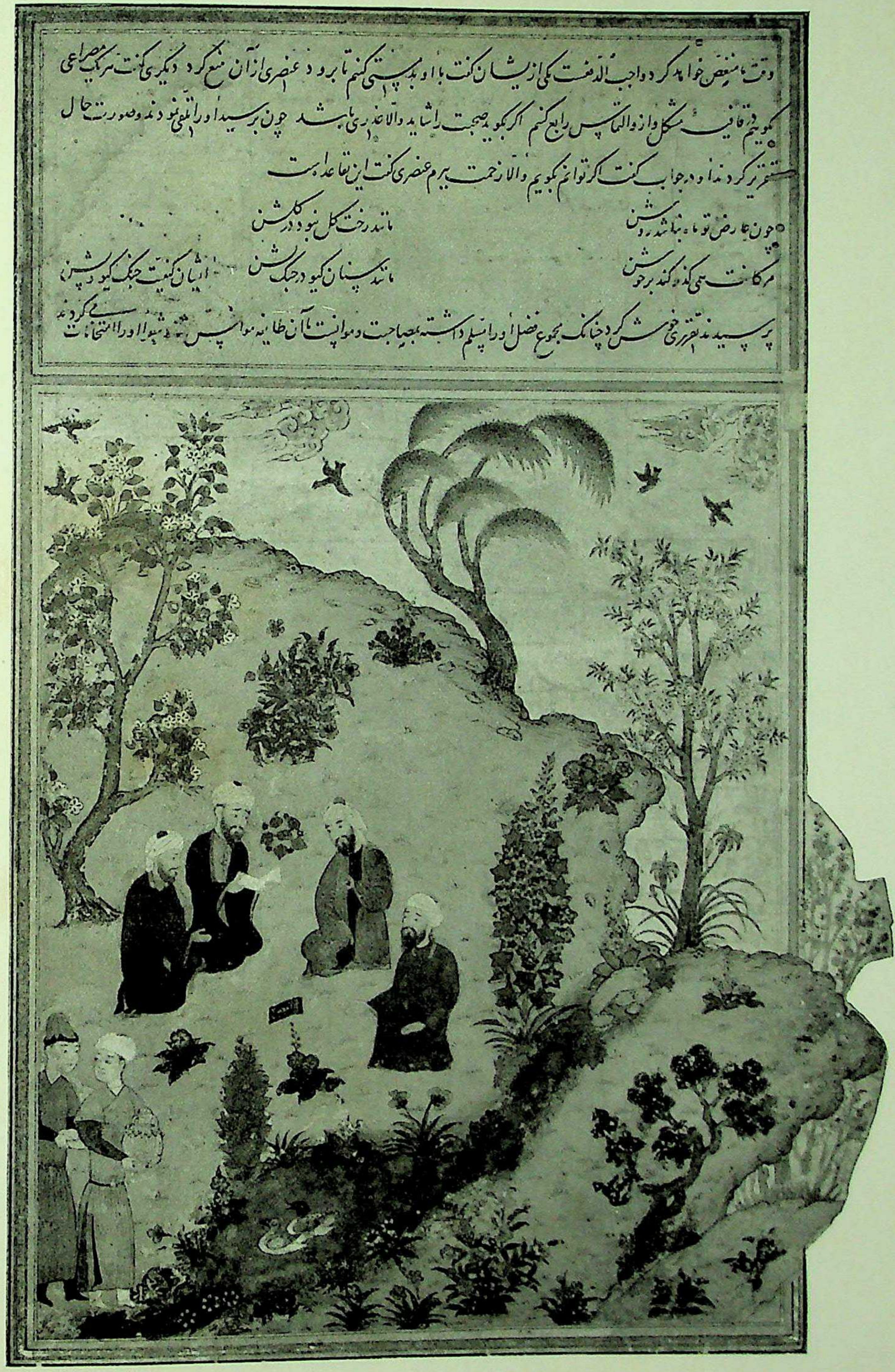
> Like the spear of Gīv in his fight with Pūshan.

On Firdausī explaining the erudite allusion (to an incident in the national legend), 'Unsurī complimented him on his learning and readiness, and invited him to join the party. During the evening he profoundly impressed them with his genius, and they afterwards introduced him to the Sultan's favour.

The story is one to appeal to the Persian illustrator. Poets or mystics discoursing in a garden are portrayed again and again, especially by the Herat artists. There is, for instance, an exquisite painting by Qāsim 'Alī, Bihzād's famous contemporary at Sultān Husain Mīrzā's court, in a manuscript, dated 1485, now in the Bodleian. It is illustrated in *Painting in Islam*, by Sir Thomas Arnold, Plate XLIII. But this earlier painting does not suffer by comparison; in fact in composition it seems to have the advantage (Plate 2).

All the other paintings in this manuscript are illustrations to the poem itself.

II. FIRDAUSI'S MEETING WITH THE COURT POETS OF GHAZNA



وقت ما منغص خواهد کرد واجب الدفعست یکی از ایشان گفت با او بدپستی کنیم تا برود عنصری از آن منع کرد دیگری گفت هر یک مصراعی بگوییم در قافیه مشکل و از و التماس رابع کنیم اگر بگوید صحبت را شاید و الا عذری باشد چون برسید او را التماس نمودند و صورت حال تقریر کردند او در جواب گفت اگر توانم بگویم و الا زحمت ببرم عنصری گفت این قاعده است

چون عارض تو ماه نباشد روشن | مانند رخت گل نبود در گلشن
مژگانت همی گذر کند بر جوشن | مانند سنان گیو در جنگ پشن

ایشان گفتند جنگ گیو در پشن

پرسیدند تقریر خوش کرد چنانکه مجموع فضل او را تسلیم داشته بصحاحبت و مؤانست آن طایفه مؤانس شد و او را امتحانات بسیار کردند

IV. THE STORIES OF THE POEM

¶ *The Early Kings*

NOTHING like a résumé of the whole *Shāh-Nāmah* is attempted in the following pages, which are mainly concerned with the stories illustrated in the manuscript. But a few words on the framework of the poem are necessary.

Firdausī's pre-Muhammadan dynasties are four, the Pishdadian, the Kayanian, the Ashkanian, and the Sasanian. The kings of the first two are legendary beings of the national mythology. The third is dimly historical, treating of the five hundred years of Seleukid and Parthian rule which intervened between Alexander the Great and the Sasanians, the account of whom is based on facts in their proper sequence, though with a liberal intermingling of mythological matter.

The first king of all, Gayūmarth, is also the first ruler of the world, a mountain dweller who subjugates the beasts and wars with the demons. Hūshang, his successor, invents agriculture and working in metals, and discovers fire. Tahmūrath conquers Āhriman, the Evil Spirit, and subdues the demons, whom he forces to teach him the art of writing. Jamshīd, greater than any of these, the owner of the magic 'seven-ringed cup' and an aerial throne, introduces precious stones and further refinements, but aspires to divinity and is overthrown by Zahhāk,[1] an instrument of Āhriman.

Zahhāk, who requires daily a meal of the brains of two youths to feed the two serpents that grow from his shoulders, provokes a revolt of his subjects under Kāvah, the smith, who brings the youthful Farīdūn, of the race of the Kayān, out from hiding. Farīdūn, the Just, divides his realms between his three sons, giving to the youngest, Īraj, the chosen land of Īrān. The elder sons, Salm and Tūr, murder their brother, whose son, Manūchihr, finally revenges him. The unending feud between Īrān and Tūrān, the Persian and the Turkish races, is thus initiated, and it is during the reign of Manūchihr that the greatest champions of Īrān come into the story.

¶ *The Reign of Manūchihr*

There ruled in Kābulistān[2] a mighty chief of Paladins, whose name was Sām. And he was childless for a time, till at last a child was born to him, beautiful in all save that his hair was white. And since the Iranians of those days held white in abhorrence, Sām commanded his servants to bear the child away and abandon it.

[1] Zahhāk, historically, represents the Semitic domination of Babylon over Persia.

[2] Sistan.

So they took the child far away to the mountain Alburz, where the wondrous great bird, the Sīmurgh, had her nest, and they laid him among the rocks, and left him. The Sīmurgh espied him from the air, swooped down, and bore him off in her talons to her nest for her young to devour. But they refrained, and the Sīmurgh fed him with choice morsels, and cared for him, and reared him tenderly. But after years had passed, Sām dreamed of his son, and on his telling his dream to the Magian priests they bade him go and search for the child whom he had so cruelly abandoned.

So Sām set forth, and came at last to the mountain, on which a mighty nest was built, of ebony and sandal-wood, with no way of approach. And in the nest, with the Sīmurgh, was standing a youth, of stature like a cypress, whose face was as the face of Sām. And Sām gave thanks to God. So the Sīmurgh looked down, and saw that the King had come for his son; and she spoke to the boy, and told him that it was time for him to return to his people, and that his father was Sām, mightiest of Paladins. The youth listened and wept, for the bird had been as a mother to him. But the Sīmurgh said that though she would fain keep him his duty called him forth, and when he had seen the splendour of men's houses he would not think so highly of the nest where he had been reared. Yet, that he might not forget her, she bestowed on him a feather from her breast.

'In the day of need,' she told him, 'cast it on the fire, and I will come and aid you.'

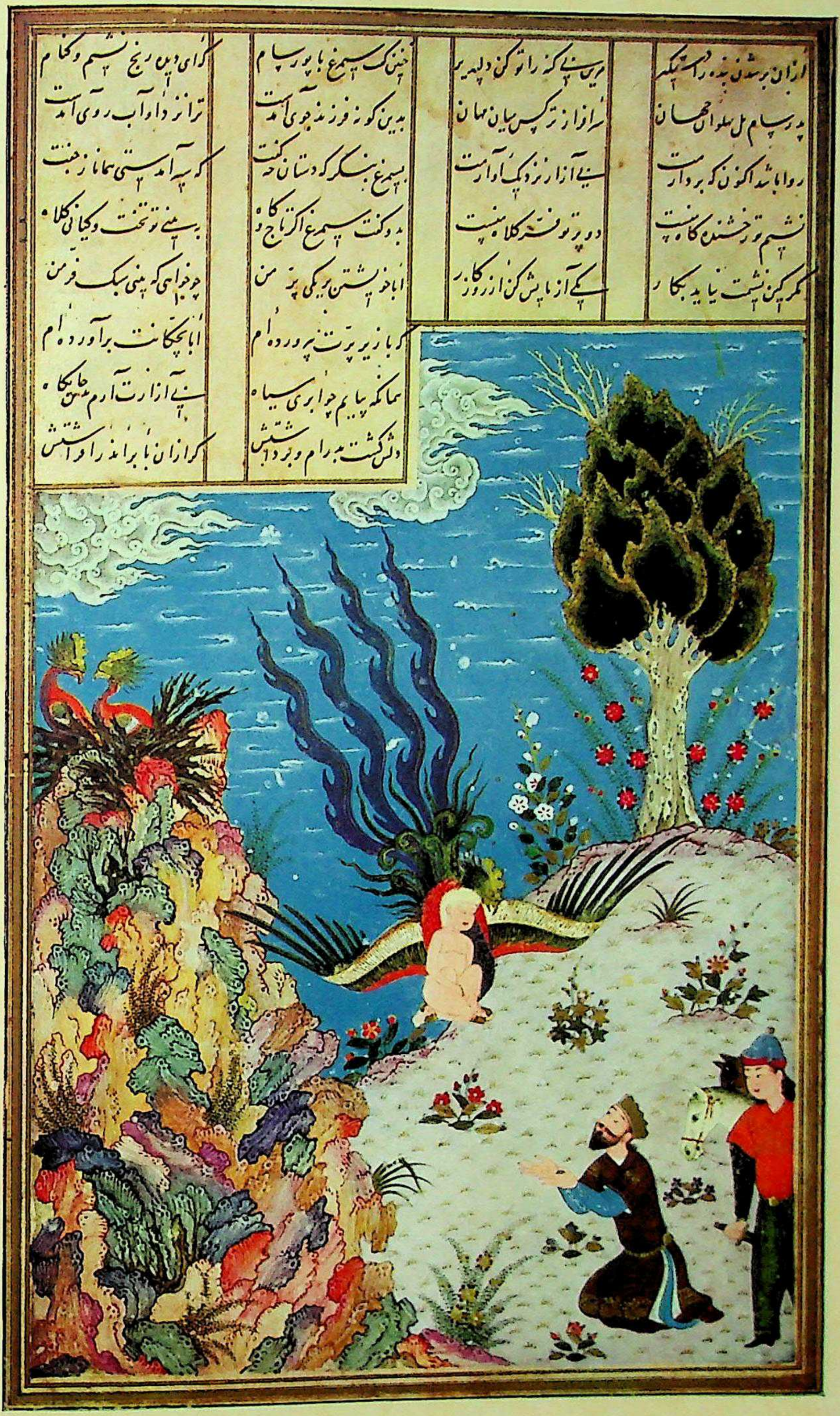
> She thus consoled his heart, then took him up,
> Bore him with stately motion to the clouds,
> And swooping down conveyed him to his sire.

Then Sām did obeisance to the Sīmurgh, but she rose on her wings and flew away. And Sām turned again to his son and saw that, save for the whiteness of his hair, there was no blemish in him. So he blessed him, and asked his forgiveness, and clothing him in a princely dress he showed him to his army, who raised a shout of joy. And they returned home to the strains of trumpets and cymbals, and all the people rejoiced because Sām had found his son again.

[The illustration (Plate 3) shows the Sīmurgh bearing the boy—here represented as a small child—back to the kneeling King. The Sīmurgh is, as always, represented in a form borrowed from Chinese art. Its wings and the spreading foliage make an exquisite pattern against the sky. The clouds, which have been partly over-painted, are also a borrowing from China. The curious rocks suggest faces.]

The story goes on to tell how Sām brought the young Zāl before the Shāh Manūchihr, who commanded that he should guard him for the sake of Īrān, and

III. THE SĪMURGH RESTORES ZĀL TO HIS FATHER SĀM



ازان برشدن بنده را دستگیر
مرین بی‌گنه را تو کن دلپذیر
چنین گفت سیمرغ با پور سام
که ای دیده رنج نشیم و کنام
پدر سام یل پهلوان جهان
سرافرازتر کس میان مهان
بدین کوه فرزند جوی آمدست
ترا نزد او آب روی آمدست
روا باشد اکنون که بردارمت
بی‌آزار نزدیک او آرمت
بسیمرغ بنگر که دستان چه گفت
که سیر آمدستی همانا ز جفت
نشیم تو رخشنده گاه منست
دو پر تو فر کلاه منست
بدو گفت سیمرغ اگر تاج و گاه
ببینی تو تخت و کیانی کلاه
نگر کین نشست نیاید بکار
یکی آزمایش کن از روزگار
ابا خویشتن بر یکی پر من
چو خواهی که بینی بسک فر من
که با زیر پرت پرورده‌ام
ابا بچگانت برآورده‌ام
همانگه بیایم چو ابری سیاه
بی‌آزارت آرم بدین جایگاه
دلش گشت بدرام و برداشتش
گرازان بابر اندر افراشتش

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teach him the ways of the court and the arts of war. So Zāl grew in strength and wisdom, and when Sām was called to the wars he left the rule of the kingdom to his son, who ruled well and wisely.

Of the charming story of Zāl's courtship with Rūdābah, daughter of the King of Kābul—one of the great love-stories of the *Shāh-Nāmah*—the manuscript contains no illustration; nor of the birth of their child Rustam, later to be the mightiest of all the Paladins, whose exploits fill many pages of the poem. So stupendous a hero could hardly come into the world in the ordinary way, and before Rustam could be brought forth a Caesarian operation had to be performed under the direction of the Sīmurgh, who was summoned by the burning of the feather which she had bestowed on Zāl when he left her nest.

The child was a prodigy from his birth:

> The first day thou hadst called him twelve months old—
> A very heap of lilies mixed with tulips.

They made a silken image of him, and arming it with spear and mace, and setting it on a horse, sent it to his grandfather Sām, who rejoiced exceedingly, and held a great feast to celebrate the occasion.

[An illustration, not reproduced here, shows the presentation of the image to the old King.]

Meanwhile, the child Rustam needed ten nurses to suckle him, and when he was weaned he ate as much as five men; so that he grew like a lion in strength. And one day when Rustam was sleeping in his chamber, a shout was raised outside that the King's white elephant had broken loose, and that the people of the house were in danger. He sprang up and seized the mace of Sām, but the gate-keepers stood in his way to prevent him, saying that they feared the King's displeasure. Then Rustam struck down one of them, and when the others fled he broke down with mighty blows the chains that held the gates, and approached the great beast alone, for all the others were afraid. Then Rustam

> roared like a lion
> And went courageously against the beast,
> Which seeing him charged at him like a mountain
> And reared its trunk to strike, but Rustam dealt it
> A mace-blow on the head,—

and it fell to the ground and died. But Rustam returned to his chamber and slept as before.

[The child Rustam in the illustration (Plate 4) is wearing his leopard-skin cap, a form of head-dress[1] which he traditionally carries. He prances away from the stricken elephant somewhat in the manner of a victorious wrestler in the arena. An attendant behind him bites the finger of astonishment—a customary gesture in Persian and Indian paintings. The flowering tree is again strongly reminiscent of the Far East. A deep blue sky gives a note of brilliant colour to the painting, in which white and pale green predominate.]

¶ *The Seven Courses of Rustam*

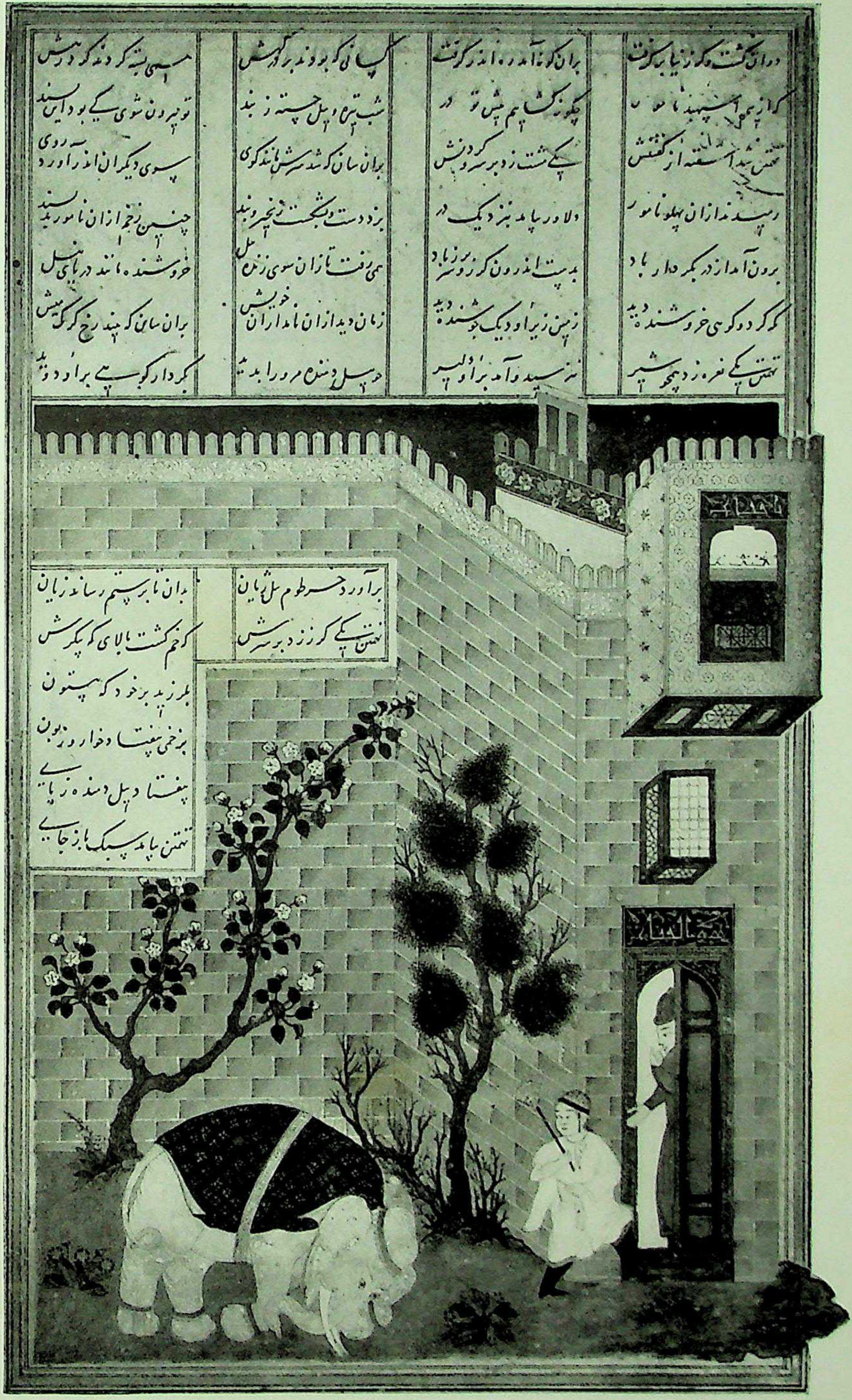
So Rustam's strength increased; and before he came to manhood he gave proof of his valour against the enemies of his fathers.

Now when the Shāh Manūchihr was dead, the King of Tūrān sent his son Afrāsiyāb to invade Īrān. And Afrāsiyāb took Naudar the Shāh prisoner, and slew him. And under the Kings that followed Īrān was hard pressed by the armies of Afrāsiyāb, and the Iranians called on Zāl to help them in their trouble. But Zāl answered that he was old, and that they should look to Rustam for help. So he gave Rustam the mace of Sām, and gathered together all the horses of his realm that Rustam might choose one for his steed. And Rustam chose a colt with shoulders like a lion, in colour like saffron pied with rose petals, and he caught it and leapt upon its back. The colt's name was Rakhsh, and it bore him till the day of his death, and shared in his wanderings and perils all his days. Then Rustam went with Zāl, his father, against the host of Afrāsiyāb. And he sought out Kai Qubād of the race of Farīdūn, and brought him to the armies, and they advanced and routed the Turanians so that they sued for peace. And Rustam, though not yet fully grown, fought with the fury of a young lion, and established his name in Īrān. Then Kai Qubād ruled in peace for a hundred years.

But when the foolish Kai Kā'ūs, his son, was king a demon tempted him and, in his pride and covetousness, he tried to conquer the land of Māzandarān, the home of the demons. And he was defeated by the demons, who took him captive with all his host, and blinded them. Then Zāl bade Rustam go to rescue Kai Kā'ūs, and told him that there was a short way to that place if he were prepared to encounter great dangers. And Rustam chose the short way, for danger was a joy to him; and mounting Rakhsh his horse he went to save the Shāh. But on each of the seven days of his journey he encountered a fresh peril. On the first day, when he was sleeping, a lion espied him, but his horse Rakhsh fought with the lion and trampled it to death. And on the second day Rustam was saved from perishing of thirst in a burning desert by following a ram, which led him to a spring of water. On the third night,

[1] Illustrations show a tiger-skin and a leopard-skin indifferently.

IV. THE YOUNG RUSTAM SLAYS THE WHITE ELEPHANT



دوان گشت و گرز نیا برگرفت بران کو نه آمد ره اندر گرفت
کسپانی که بودند بر درگهش همی بسته کردند گرد رهش
که از بیم اسپهبد نامور چگونه گشایم پیش تو در
شب تیره و پیل جسته ز بند تو بیرون شوی کی بود این پسند
تهمتن شد آشفته از گفتشان یکی مشت زد بر سر و گردنش
بران سان که شد سرش مانند گوی سوی دیگران اندر آورد روی
رمیدند ازان پهلو نامور دلاور بیامد بنزدیک در
بزد دست و بشکست زنجیر و بند چنین زخم ازان نامور بد پسند
برون آمد از در بکردار باد بدست اندرون گرز و سر پر ز باد
همی رفت تازان سوی زنده پیل خروشنده مانند دریای نیل
که کرد و کوهی خروشنده دید زمین زیر او دیگ جوشنده دید
زمان دید ازان نامداران خویش بران سان که بیند رخ گرگ میش
تهمتن یکی نعره زد همچو شیر نترسید و آمد بر او دلیر
چو پیل دمنده مر او را بدید بکردار کوهی بر او دوید
برآورد خرطوم پیل ژیان بدان تا بر رستم رساند زیان
تهمتن یکی گرز زد بر سرش که خم گشت بالای که پیکرش
بلرزید بر خود که بیستون بزخمی بیفتاد خوار و زبون
بیفتاد پیل دمنده ز پای تهمتن بیامد سبک باز جای

warned by the neighing of Rakhsh, he slew a dragon that approached him. On the fourth day a witch in the guise of a young damsel tried to seduce him, but when he uttered the name of Ormazd her nature was revealed, and he killed her also. On the fifth day Rakhsh went to graze in a field of a certain prince, and the prince upbraided Rustam, but Rustam routed his army, and caught the prince in his noose, and bade him show the way to the dwelling of the White Dīv, who had taken captive the Shāh of Īrān. So guided by the prince he went to that place, and overcame the leader of the demons, so that they fled; and Rustam came into the presence of the Shāh and told him that he had come to deliver him.

This was the sixth labour of Rustam. And for his seventh labour he must needs conquer the terrible White Dīv. But this too he accomplished; and he poured the blood of the Dīv in the eyes of Kai Kā'ūs and his companions, and their blindness was cured.

[The seven courses of Rustam are favourite subjects of illustration, especially the last.

The painting of the slaying of the White Dīv is not reproduced here.]

¶ *The Story of Suhrāb*

Far more familiar to English readers, on account of its having furnished the theme of Matthew Arnold's famous poem, is the episode of Suhrāb. Matthew Arnold, however, in 'Sohrab and Rustum', hardly mentions the tragic story's romantic prelude, which is as follows:

One morning Rustam resolved to go hunting; and filling his quiver he mounted Rakhsh and rode towards the borders of Tūrān, where the plain was stocked with wild asses. And after hunting he roasted an onager on a tree for a spit, and after he had eaten he lay down and slept, while Rakhsh grazed beside him. Some Turkman horsemen passed by that way, and tried to snare Rakhsh with their nooses. But he struck down two with his hoofs, and tore off the head of another with his teeth. At length the others snared him and carried him off to the city.

When Rustam awoke, he searched for Rakhsh, and at last espied his tracks; and following them he hastened towards the city, in shame and anger. But as he approached the King of Samangān came out to greet him, and Rustam told him of his loss, and vowed vengeance if Rakhsh were not restored to him. The King calmed him with kindly assurances. 'For', he said, 'none would oppose so mighty a paladin. Come, then, and be my guest, and put anger aside. Let us feast and drink together. Rustam's Rakhsh cannot be hidden long, and I will send men to find him and bring him quickly back.' So Rustam was pacified, and abandoned suspicious thoughts, and the King treated him with honour, and summoned his nobles to his table; and they feasted together, and made merry with wine and music. After the feast Rustam, drowsy with good cheer, went to the chamber which the King had furnished for him, and lay upon the couch, perfumed with rose-water and musk, that was set within it.

But when the morning star was high in the heaven, the door of the chamber was gently opened, a soft whispering was heard, and a slave entered with a taper perfumed with amber.

> Behind the slave there was a moon-faced girl,
> Sun-bright, all scent and hue, with arching eyebrows
> And locks that hung in tresses lasso-like,
> In stature like a lofty cypress-tree
> With cheeks carnelians of Yaman in colour.

And Rustam was astonished, and asked her her name, and what she sought.

The maiden answered that her name was Tahmīnah, the daughter of the King, half-lion and half-leopard by descent, and that no king on earth was worthy of her hand, and none had been privileged to see her face. But she had heard of Rustam's mighty deeds, and how he slew demons and lions, leopards and crocodiles, and devoured wild asses; and how eagles feared to swoop on their quarry for dread of his sword. Stirred by the tales that she had heard, she had often longed to see him face to face. And now that God had brought him to that city, she had come to tell him that if he wished for her she was his to take; and perchance God would grant her a son like Rustam in courage and might. Moreover, she would bring back Rakhsh to him, and would put all Samangān under his feet.

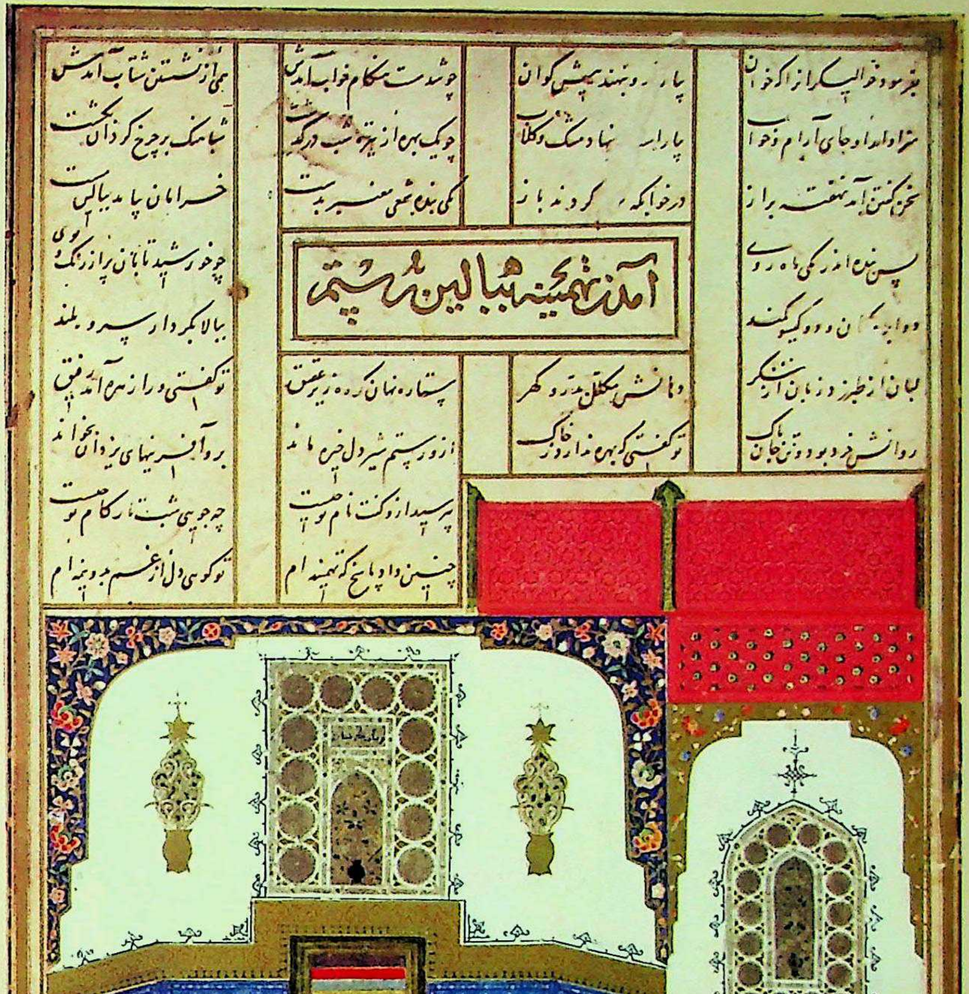
Rustam gazed at her as she spoke, and, conquered by her beauty and her wit, and gladdened by her tidings of Rakhsh, he sent a Mubīd to the King to demand the hand of Tahmīnah. And the King was glad that his daughter should wed the mighty Rustam, and straightway bestowed her on him with the customary rites.

And Rustam gave Tahmīnah a famous armlet that he wore, and told her to keep it, and if she bore a daughter to fasten it in her hair, and if a son, to bind it round his arm; and he foretold that he would be mighty as his forefathers.

But when the morning came, and news was brought that Rakhsh was found, Rustam longed to be gone, and hastened forth to caress him, and setting the saddle on him he mounted and rode away. And he told no one of what had befallen.

[Plate 5 shows the meeting between Rustam and Tahmīnah. The painting is a most impressive one, not only from its compositional quality, the lovely colour scheme and the aptness of the detail, but from the painter's sympathy with the story and realization of the contrasting types of the hero and the Princess.]

V. THE MEETING BETWEEN TAHMĪNAH AND RUSTAM



بفرمود خوالیگران را که خوان
بیارند و بنهند پیش گوان

چو شد مست هنگام خواب آمدش
همی از نشستن شتاب آمدش

سزاوار او جای آرام و خواب
بیاراست و بنهاد مشک و گلاب

چو یک بهره از تیره شب درگذشت
شباهنگ بر چرخ گردان بگشت

سخن گفتن آمد نهفته براز
در خوابگه نرم کردند باز

یکی بنده شمعی معنبر بدست
خرامان بیامد ببالین مست

آمدن تهمینه ببالین رستم

پس پرده اندر یکی ماه روی
چو خورشید تابان پر از رنگ و بوی

دو ابرو کمان و دو گیسو کمند
ببالا بکردار سرو بلند

لبان از طبرزد زبان از شکر
دهانش مکلل بدر و گهر

ستاره نهان کرده زیر عقیق
تو گفتی ورا زهره آمد رفیق

روانش خرد بود و تن جان پاک
تو گفتی که بهره ندارد ز خاک

ازو رستم شیردل خیره ماند
برو آفرینهای یزدان بخواند

بپرسید ازو گفت نام تو چیست
چه جویی شب تار کام تو چیست

چنین داد پاسخ که تهمینه ام
تو گویی دل از غم بدو نیمه ام

بگیتی ز شاهان مرا جفت نیست
چو من زیر چرخ بلند اندکیست

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When her time was come, Tahmīnah bore a son, to whom she gave the name of Suhrāb. And while Suhrāb was yet a lad he gained fame by his proud spirit and his prowess in battle. And Tahmīnah gave him the armlet of Rustam to wear, and told him that Rustam was his father, but begged him to keep the matter secret, for she feared that Rustam's enemies might wish to destroy his son. But Suhrāb's heart was fired, and he swore that he would make war on Īrān, seek out Rustam, depose the foolish Kai Kā'ūs, and make Rustam king in his place. So he gathered an army together, and advanced into Īrān; and the Iranians were filled with terror at his approach. And Kai Kā'ūs, the Shāh, was afraid of him, and sent a man to Rustam, bidding him come to his help. But Rustam delayed, and quarrelled with the Shāh; but at last he consented to bring help to Īrān.

So the armies prepared for battle, and were halted over against each other. And in the night a desire came upon Rustam to look upon the face of Suhrāb, for he had heard of his prowess. And he disguised himself, and went secretly to the tent of Suhrāb while he was feasting, and watched him at the feast. But the brother of Tahmīnah, whom she had sent with Suhrāb to point out Rustam to him, recognized Rustam; and when he would have revealed that Rustam was come among them, Rustam slew him, and escaped back to his encampment.

But in the morning Suhrāb ascended a high place, and looked down upon the tents of the Iranians. And with him was an Iranian captive, and Suhrāb asked him of the different enemy leaders, and of the position of their tents. But when he pointed out the tent of Rustam, the prisoner feared for Rustam's safety, and would not reveal whose tent it was. Then Suhrāb was saddened, and tried to find out where Rustam was encamped; but none could show him the place.

Then Suhrāb rode out between the armies and called out a challenge; and Rustam rode out to oppose him; but when he saw him his heart went out to Suhrāb, and he besought him to withhold his challenge. And Suhrāb was drawn towards Rustam, and entreated him to reveal his name, 'For I believe', he said, 'that you are Rustam, Son of Zāl'. But Rustam lied to him, and denied it, for he wished that the Turanians might look on his prowess and fear a greater champion than him. And Suhrāb was sad at heart, for he had hoped that he had found his father.

Then Rustam and Suhrāb fought together all day till the evening, and neither could vanquish the other. And when they ceased from fighting each praised the valour of his enemy. But on the second day Suhrāb proposed to Rustam that they should make peace, for his heart was averse from fighting, and he longed for the friendship of Rustam. But Rustam was ashamed to make peace. So they fought again all that day; and Rustam was thrown down in the fight, yet by his guile he escaped. And on the third day Suhrāb was very angry, because Rustam had beguiled him. And they fell to again, and wrestled together. And Rustam threw Suhrāb backwards, and stabbed him. But as Suhrāb lay dying, he spoke the name of Rustam, saying that he was Rustam's son. And Rustam also recognized the armlet that he wore. And he knew that he had slain his son.

[The illustration of the death of Suhrāb is not reproduced.]

¶ *The Story of Siyāvush*

One morning Tūs, Gīv, Gūdarz, and other Paladins went out to hunt. And as they hunted they passed through a wood, and came upon a maiden fair of face and of stature like a cypress, who told them that she was of the race of Farīdūn, and that she had escaped from a band of robbers. And the knights quarrelled as to who should possess her, so at last they referred the matter to Kai Kā'ūs the Shāh. But he, when he saw her beauty, and heard of her lineage, took her for himself, and set her on his throne.

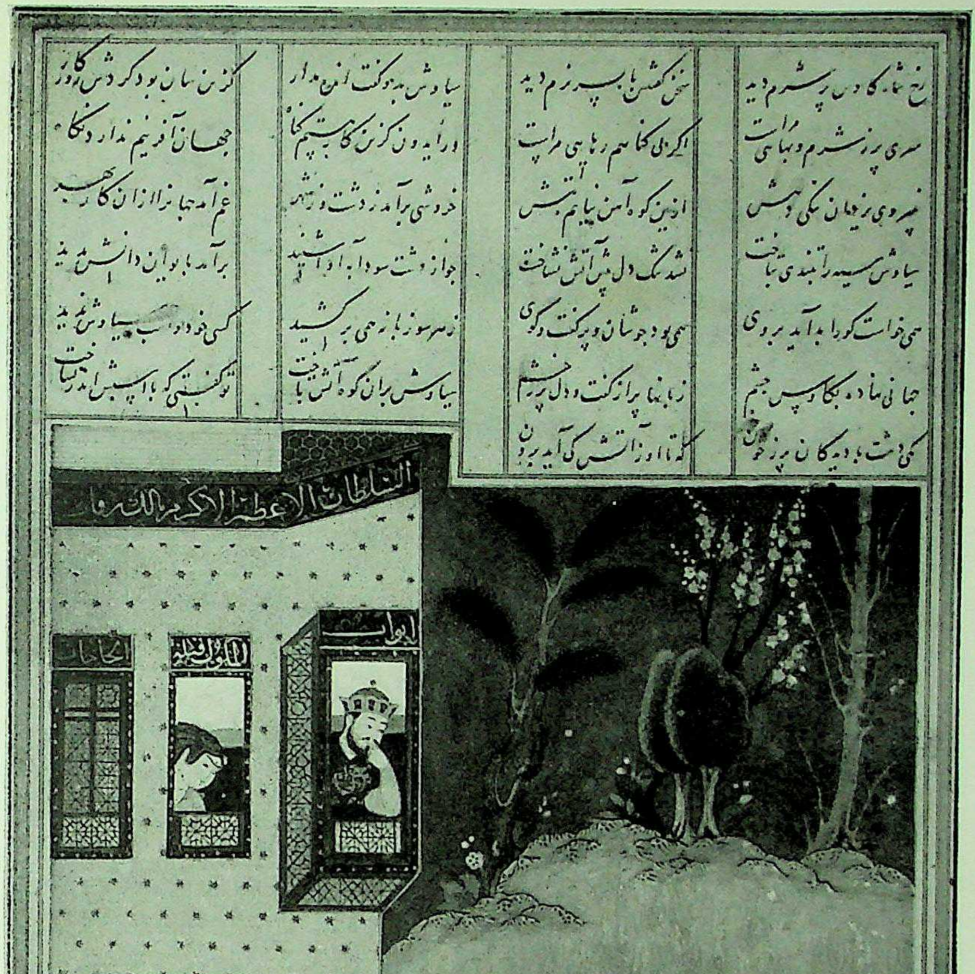
In time she bore the Shāh a son, strong and beautiful, so that the Shāh loved him; but the stars were adverse to him. And Rustam heard of him, and begged Kai Kā'ūs that he might take him to Zābulistān to train him in manly accomplishments. The Shāh consented, and Rustam took the young Siyāvush, and taught him riding and archery and all arts that befit a prince, and expended all his care upon him. And Siyāvush grew in strength and stature.

But one day he begged that he might go and visit his father. And Rustam brought him to the Shāh, who received him with gladness, and regarded him with favour. And he tried him for seven years, and found no fault in him, for he was worthy in all ways of the throne of Īrān. So the Shāh bestowed on him the whole realm of Kuhistān.

But when the mother of Siyāvush was dead, the Queen Sūdābah's heart was inflamed with love for the Prince. So she sent for him to her chamber, and he refused to come to her. Then she asked the Shāh to send him to her, that he might meet her daughters, and perchance take one of them to wife. And the Shāh ordered him to go.

Now Sūdābah had decked herself for his coming, and she came down from her throne, and kissed and embraced him; but he passed away from her. And again she asked the Shāh to send him behind the veil, and when Siyāvush entered she unveiled before him, and fell on his neck, and tempted him. And so it happened a third time; but Siyāvush turned from her, for he would not bring shame upon the Shāh, his father.

VI. SIYĀVUSH PASSING THE FIRE-TEST



رخ شاه کاوس پر شرم دید سخن گفتن با پدر نرم دید
سیاوش بدو گفت انده مدار کزین سان بود گردش روزگار
سری پر ز شرم و بهایی مراست اگر بی گناهم رهایی مراست
ور ایدون کزین کار هستم گناه جهان آفرینم ندارد نگاه
ز نیروی یزدان نیکی دهش ازین کوه آتش نیابم تپش
خروشی برآمد ز دشت و ز شهر غم آمد جهان را ازان کار بهر
سیاوش سیه را بتندی بتاخت نشد تنگ دل جنگ آتش بساخت
چو از دشت سودابه آوا شنید برآمد بایوان و آتش بدید
همی خواست کو را بد آید بروی همی بود جوشان و پر گفت و گوی
ز هر سو زبانه همی بر کشید کسی خود و اسپ سیاوش ندید
جهانی نهاده بکاوس چشم زبانها پر از گفت و دل پر ز خشم
یکی دشت با دیدگان پر ز خون که تا او ز آتش کی آید برون
سیاوش بران کوه آتش بتاخت تو گفتی که با اسپش اندر بساخت

Then Sūdābah hated Siyāvush; and she rent her robe, and disarrayed her hair, and accused him falsely before the Shāh of proposing love to her. Then Kai Kā'ūs sent for his son, and questioned him in Sūdābah's presence; and he told the Shāh how she had tempted him. And the Shāh was troubled, and could not decide clearly which of them spoke the truth, though he suspected Sūdābah; yet he loved her and would not deny her word. But neither would he act against his son, for he believed him guiltless. So Sūdābah procured two babes, that had been born untimely, and sent them to the Shāh on a golden dish, saying that they were hers, and that Siyāvush was their father. But Kai Kā'ūs inquired of the astrologers, and they, by means of omens, proved that the babes were not of the royal race. But Sūdābah said that for love of Siyāvush they had concealed the truth.

Then the Shāh said that he had no certainty between them, and that only by the fire-test could the truth be proved. So he ordered that firewood should be brought from the forest; and they brought wood on camels, and piled it in two heaps as high as mountains, that could be seen at the distance of two *farsakhs,* with a path between them such that a horseman could hardly pass through; and they poured naphtha on the piles. And two hundred men brought fire to light the wood, and the flames ascended, and scorched the people. But Siyāvush advanced, wearing a golden helmet and white raiment, and did obeisance before the Shāh. Then, after offering a prayer, he mounted his black horse, and rode through the flames; and a cry of sorrow rose from all that were present. But Siyāvush rode through unharmed, and his robe was not blackened; and he went before the Shāh and, dismounting, knelt before him. And the people shouted aloud for joy.

Then the Shāh embraced his son, and asked his forgiveness, and led him to the palace; and they held revel for three days.

On the fourth day the Shāh ascended his throne, and holding his ox-headed mace he summoned Sūdābah and ordered her to prepare for death. But Siyāvush went before the Shāh and prayed him to spare her. And the Shāh granted his prayer, for he loved Sūdābah. But in time she began to speak evil again of Siyāvush, and he listened to her words.

About this time news was brought that Afrāsiyāb had advanced upon Īrān with a great host. And Siyāvush asked the King that he might command the armies, for he yearned to be rid of Sūdābah's wiles and his father's distrust. And Kai Kā'ūs assented, but he sent to Rustam, and bade him go with the Prince and watch over him in the battle. And Rustam replied:

I am thy slave;
To hear is to obey, for Siyāvush
Is as mine eye and soul.

So the army was arrayed, and Siyāvush rode forth to the sound of drums and trumpets; and the King rode with him part of the way; and they both wept at parting.

And Siyāvush led the host through Zābulistān to Balkh, and Rustam was with him. Then they advanced against the army of Tūrān, which was commanded by Garsīvaz, brother to Afrāsiyāb. For three days they fought, but on the fourth the army of Tūrān was driven back. But Afrāsiyāb, because of a dream that warned him against Siyāvush, proposed terms of peace; and Siyāvush accepted the terms, but demanded as hostages a hundred men of Tūrān allied by blood to Afrāsiyāb, and these were granted, and all the land which was taken from Īrān was restored.

But when Rustam went before Kai Kā'ūs and told him of the peace that had been made, and praised the wisdom of Siyāvush, the King was angry, and upbraided his son and Rustam, saying that Tūs should be general instead.

And Rustam returned to his home in wrath; and he sent a letter to Siyāvush, bidding him resign the army to Tūs, and send the hostages in fetters to him. But Siyāvush, when he received the letter, was troubled; for he knew that if he sent the hostages to the Shāh they would be put to death, and he himself would be shamed before God; yet if he disobeyed, the Shāh would bring him to ruin. So he went to Afrāsiyāb and told him of the King's order, and that he was resolved not to act falsely. Then Afrāsiyāb conferred with the noble Pīrān, his counsellor, and, on Pīrān's advice, offered to receive Siyāvush with all honour in Tūrān, and to be his friend. 'Moreover,' he wrote,

'I have sworn by holy God
To labour, soul and body, for thy welfare.
I will not harm thee by myself or others,
Or wrong thee even in thought.'

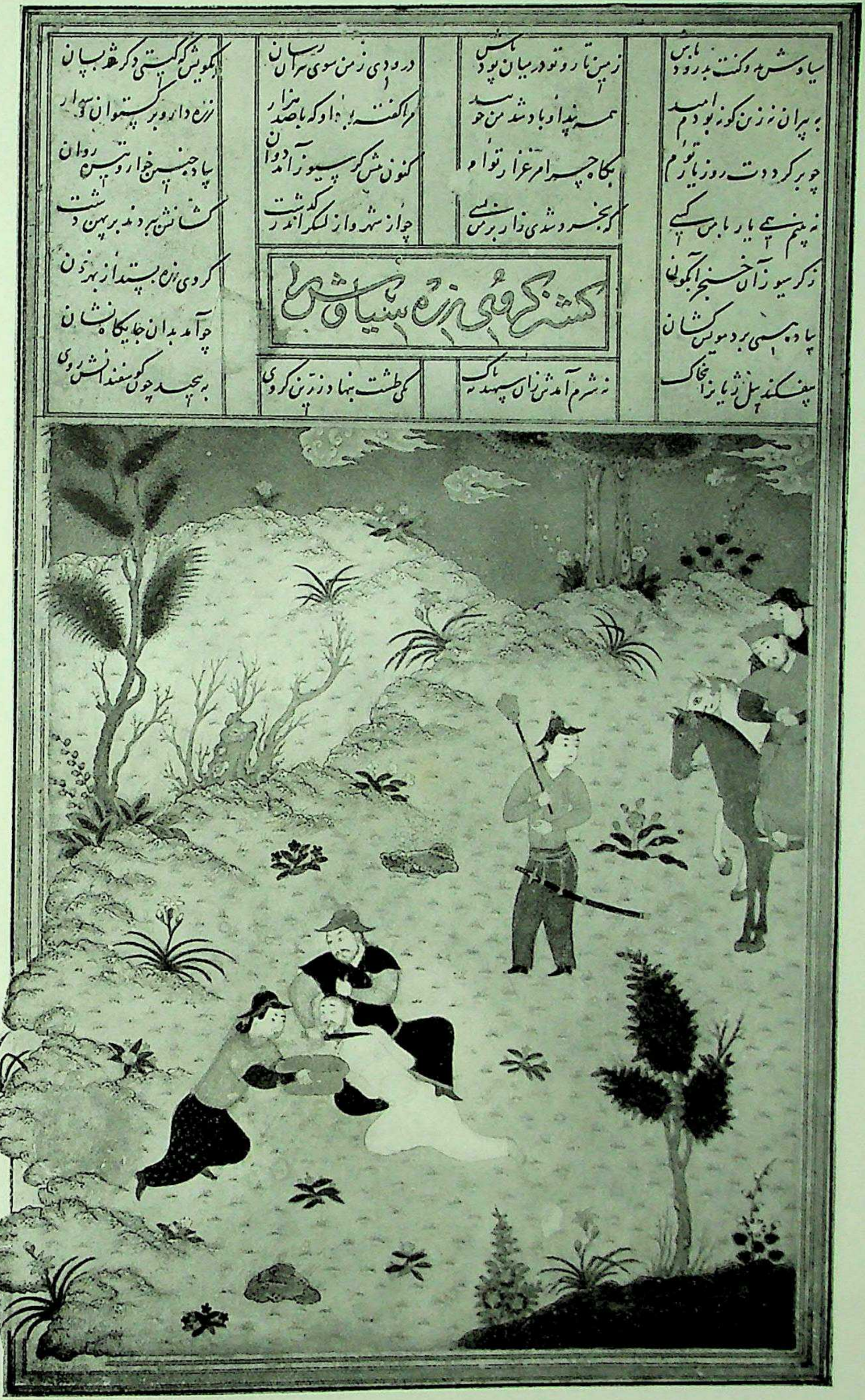
So Siyāvush came to Tūrān. And Afrāsiyāb received him hospitably and loved him as his own son.

And Siyāvush took the daughter of Pīrān to wife, and after a time Afrāsiyāb's daughter Farangīs also; for Pīrān wished, by uniting the families of Īrān and Tūrān, to end the feud between them. And Afrāsiyāb bestowed gifts on Siyāvush, and made him ruler of one of his provinces.

So Siyāvush departed for his province, and built a city like Paradise to dwell in; and he abode there in happiness and all prosperity. And a son was born to his wife, the daughter of Pīrān, and they called him Farūd.

But Garsīvaz, the brother of Afrāsiyāb, was envious of the power and wealth of Siyāvush, and he reported falsely to his brother that the Prince was plotting with the Shāh his father to destroy Tūrān. So Afrāsiyāb sent for Siyāvush, but Garsīvaz went

VII. THE MURDER OF SIYĀVUSH



سیاوش بدو گفت بدرود باش
زمین تار و تو در میان پود باش
درودی ز من سوی پیران رسان
بگویش که گیتی دگر شد بسان
به پیران نه زین گونه بودم امید
همه پند او باد شد من چو بید
مرا گفته بد او که با صد هزار
زره دار و برگستوان ور سوار
چو برگرددت روز یار توام
بگاه چرا مرغزار توام
کنون پیش گرسیوز آمد دوان
پیاده چنین خوار و تیره روان
نه بینم همی یار با من کسی
که بخروشدی زار بر من بسی
چو از شهر و از لشکر اندر گذشت
کشانش بردند بر پهن دشت

کشتن گروی زره سیاوش را

ز گرسیوز آن خنجر آبگون
گروی زره بستد از بهر خون
پیاده همی برد مویش کشان
چو آمد بدان جایگاه نشان
بیفگند پیل ژیان را بخاک
نه شرم آمدش زان سپهبد نه باک
یکی طشت بنهاد زرین گروی
بپیچید چون گوسفندانش روی

to the prince, and feigning love for him, urged him not to go before the King till his anger had abated. Then he returned to Afrāsiyāb and inflamed him further against Siyāvush, so that in the end Afrāsiyāb went with an army against the Prince. Then Siyāvush foreboded evil, yet he went to meet Afrāsiyāb. But Garsīvaz was with the King, and did not give him time to speak, and fanned the King's suspicions, so that he would not listen to the Prince, and hardened his heart against him. And he bade his army attack. But Siyāvush kept faith, and would neither draw his sword nor suffer his companions to give fight.

So at last all his companions were slain, and the Prince was wounded, and fell from his horse. Then they brought him bound before Afrāsiyāb, who bade them take him and behead him; and when Farangīs besought her father to repent of his madness, he shut the eye of wisdom, and the world was black in his sight. So they bore Farangīs away, and Garsīvaz gave the order to slay Siyāvush. And they dragged him through the dust to a place apart, and slew him with the dagger of Garsīvaz, and cut off his head.

But the people cursed Afrāsiyāb, and he sorrowed for Siyāvush, and repented of what he had done.

And Pīrān brought Farangīs to his own palace.

[There are two illustrations to the 'goodly tale', as Firdausī truly calls it, of Siyāvush.

In the first (Plate 6) Siyāvush is shown riding through the flames in the fire-test, with the Shāh and the Queen looking out at him from the palace windows, while the second (Plate 7) illustrates the murder.]

¶ *The Story of Farūd*

When Farangīs was in the palace of Pīrān she conceived, and bore a son, and they called him Kai Khusrau. And though he was of the race of Siyāvush, Afrāsiyāb spared his life; but he brought him up among shepherds, and they hid his parentage from him.

In the meantime news was brought to Īrān of the death of Siyāvush, and all the people mourned for him, and put on black and blue raiment. And the Shāh Kai Kā'ūs was filled with remorse, and rent his robes for grief.

But when Rustam was told of it his senses left him because of his grief; and he mourned for Siyāvush for a week. Then marching to the court of the Shāh he abused him bitterly, and when he had left his presence he sought out Sūdābah, and slew her in his fury. And after that he marched to Tūrān with a great army of vengeance, and slew the son of Afrāsiyāb, and Pīlsam, the brother of Pīrān. And the army of Afrāsiyāb was driven back, and Afrāsiyāb fled before Rustam. Then Rustam seated himself on the throne of Tūrān, and ruled there for seven years; but after that time he returned to Īrān, for the Shāh had need of him.

Now one day the father of Gīv, the Paladin of Īrān, had a dream, which revealed to him that there was a son of Siyāvush remaining in Tūrān. And Gīv went forth to seek him, and after seven years he found the young Prince Kai Khusrau, and knew him by the mark of the Kaianian race; and he brought him and his mother Farangīs through great perils back to Īrān. And Kai Kā'ūs welcomed his grandson, and acknowledged him as his heir. So after a space he gave up all his authority to him, and Kai Khusrau reigned in his stead.

And Kai Khusrau swore a great oath that he would not let his hatred of Afrāsiyāb die down, and would revenge Siyāvush his father. And he prepared a great army, and gave the command to Tūs. But when he sent him out against Tūrān he ordered him to be merciful towards all but the fighting men, and in particular not to march through the country where Farūd his brother, son of the daughter of Pīrān, dwelt. For he feared that harm might befall his brother. And Tūs promised to do as the Shāh commanded.

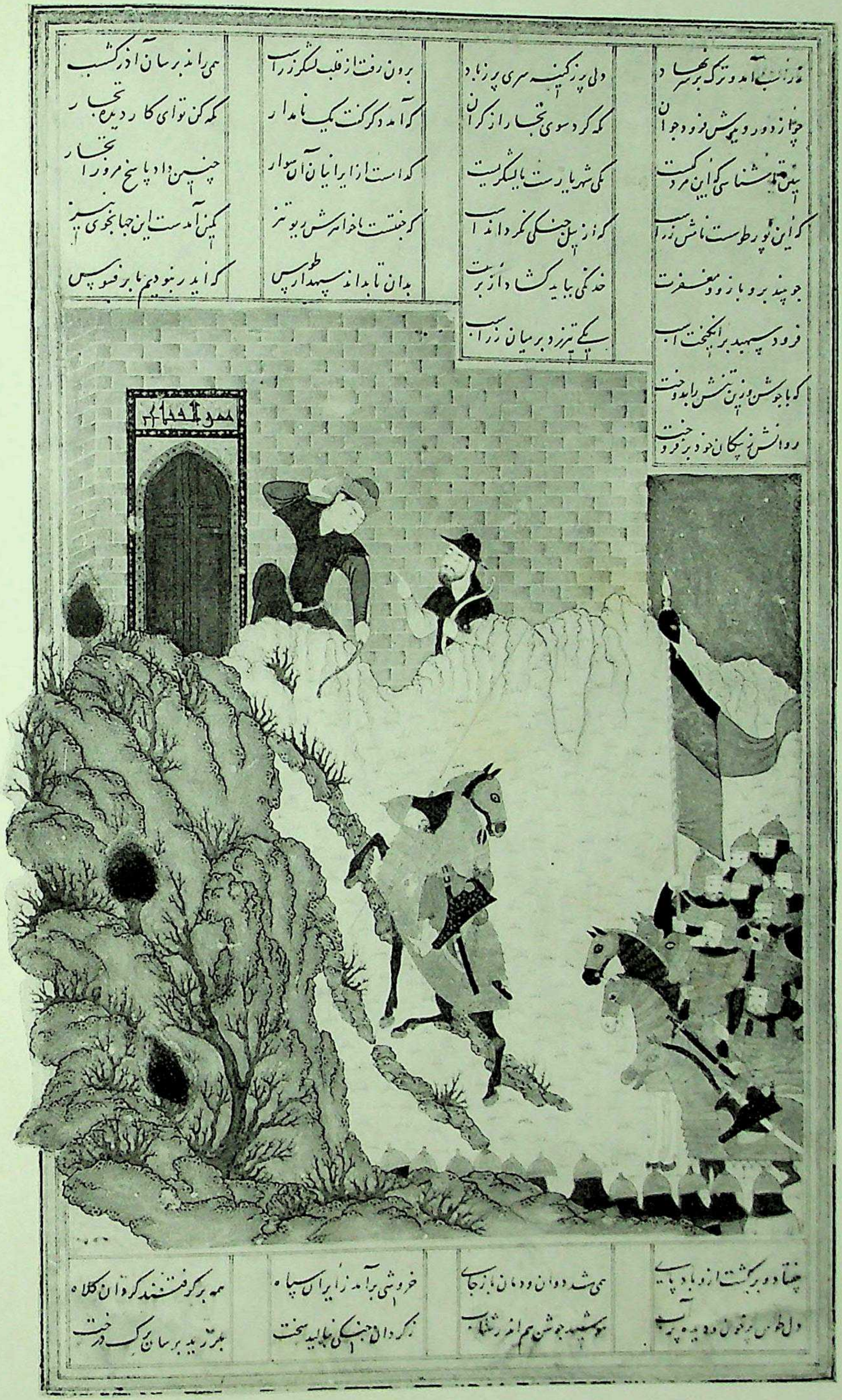
But he bore a grudge against the Shāh, and disobeyed his order, and led his army through the country of the young Prince.

Now when Farūd saw them approach he was troubled, but he went with a certain wise counsellor to a place high in Mount Sapad, and looked down from the mountain upon the host, and questioned that counsellor about the chiefs and their blazons. Then Tūs espied them from below, and in anger he ordered one of the paladins to go up to them, and find out who they were; and if they belonged to Īrān to have them beaten with whips, but if to Tūrān to bring them back to be slain.

Then that paladin went up against Farūd, and spoke threateningly to him, but received a proud answer; and when he knew that this was the brother of the Shāh he returned to Tūs. But Tūs blamed him, and exclaimed in his wrath that Farūd was a Turkman, and intended mischief to the army; and he called out for a knight to go up and behead him. Then Rīvnīz rode forth to obey him; and when Farūd saw that he came for combat he shot down a poplar shaft at him and slew him. Then Tūs sent Zarāsp, and he rode up the mountain against Farūd with loud cries and threatening aspect. But Farūd loosed a second shaft,

> and pinned him through the mail
> And loins against the saddle. His spirit flamed
> Upon the point. He fell. His wingfoot steed
> Abandoned him.

VIII. FARŪD SHOOTS ZARĀSP ON THE MOUNTAIN



زرسپ آمد و ترگ بر سر نهاد
دلی پر ز کینه سری پر ز باد
برون رفت از قلب لشکر زراسب
همی راند بر سان آذرگشسب
چو از دور دیدش فرود جوان
نگه کرد سوی تخوار از کران
که آمد دگر گرد یک نامدار
نگه کن تو ای کاردیده تخوار
ببین تا شناسی که این مرد کیست
کی شهریارست یا لشکریست
کدامست از ایرانیان آن سوار
چنین داد پاسخ مر او را تخوار
که این پور طوست نامش زراسب
گر از پیل جنگی نگرداند اسب
که جفتست با خواهرش ریونیز
کمین آمدست این جهانجوی نیز
چو بیند بر و بازو و مغفرت
خدنگی بباید گشاد از برت
بدان تا بداند سپهدار طوس
که آید ز نبودیم بار فسوس
فرود سپهبد برانگیخت اسب
یکی تیر زد بر میان زراسب
که با جوشن و زین تنش را بدوخت
روانش ز پیکان خود بر فروخت

چنان دو برگشت ازو بادپای
همی شد دوان و دمان باز جای
خروشی برآمد ز ایران سپاه
همه برگرفتند گردان کلاه
دل طوس پرخون و دیده پر آب
بپوشید جوشن هم اندر شتاب
ز گردان جنگی بنالید سخت
بلرزید بر سان برگ درخت

Then Tūs rode forth himself, but Farūd shot his horse; for he would not slay his brother's general. But others came out against him, and at last they did him to death.

When the Shāh heard that Farūd was slain he sent for Tūs in anger, and disgraced him, and appointed his own brother Farīburz general in his stead.

Yet the armies of Īrān could not prevail against Tūrān, and they were defeated; and all that were not slain fled, and returned in shame to Īrān.

In the painting (Plate 8) Farūd has just shot the fatal arrow at Zarāsp, who collapses, bleeding, on his bewildered horse. The subject, an unusual and difficult one, has been rendered with real dramatic power.

¶ *The Campaign against Tūrān*

At this point in the *Shāh-Nāmah* an instance (it is not the only one) of repetition occurs, or rather two variants of the same campaign follow close upon one another with many incidents repeated. The result is that Tūs, who has done the Shāh a deadly injury, is found, rather unconvincingly, restored to favour at Rustam's request, whereupon the long war with Tūrān begins again. Firdausī's admitting both variations is curious, as the legend of the foundation of the poet's own home town is that Tūs, after causing Farūd's death, was afraid to return to the court of Kai Khusrau, and consequently founded the city that bore his name.

Among the incidents of the war, that fill so many pages of this part of the poem, the illustrator of our manuscript has chosen three. The story of the first of these is as follows:

There was a man of the Turanians named Bāzūr who was skilled in magic and sorcery. And Pīrān ordered him to put forth his powers, and send a snow-storm and bitter cold upon the Iranians. So Bāzūr obeyed, and the hands of the spearmen of Īrān were frozen with the cold. And Pīrān gave the order to charge, and the Iranians were smitten, and the valleys were filled with snow and corpses. Then Tūs prayed to the Lord of the Fire and the Wind for deliverance, and in answer to his prayer a sage appeared before Ruhhām the Paladin, and showed him where the sorcerer was working his spells. Then Ruhhām turned from the field of battle, and girding on his mail-armour climbed up the height to that place. Bāzūr advanced to check him with a mace, but Ruhhām cut off his hand with his sword. Then a great wind blew, and the sky grew clear again, and the snow and cold ceased.

[The illustration of this scene (Plate 9) is a triumph of vivid colour contrasts. The sky is golden, the ground and rocks are orange, mauve, and a wonderful green, with several tones of blue. The circular shields are speckled black and white.]

The poem goes on to tell how the Iranians continued to suffer reverses, and were forced to take refuge on a mountain. Then Rustam is dispatched to the rescue, while on the other side Kāmūs of Kashān and the Khān of Chīn are sent by Afrāsiyāb to help Pīrān. Rustam's momentous arrival by night is impressively described. It is heralded by a watcher, who cries out:

> The plain is full of dust, the night is dark,
> The level and the upland ring with cries,
> And there are many lights among the troops.

On his arrival, the Iranians take heart. Rustam arrays the host for battle, and they descend into the plain.

Then there advanced from the other side a steel-clad knight named Ashkabūs, and issued a challenge. Ruhhām first tried his strength against him, but was worsted and retreated. Then Rustam cried out in scorn that he would take his place, and on foot. Bearing only his bow and arrow he strode forward, and met the taunts of Ashkabūs with the answer that he had come to take his horse from him, and needed nothing but what he carried to overcome so pitiful a warrior.

> He marked the pride
> Of Ashkabūs in his fine steed, and shot
> An arrow at its breast; the charger fell
> Headforemost. Rustam laughed and cried aloud:—
> 'Sit by thy noble comrade! Prithee nurse
> Its head, and rest thee from the fight awhile'.

Ashkabūs, for answer, showered arrows on Rustam, but then:

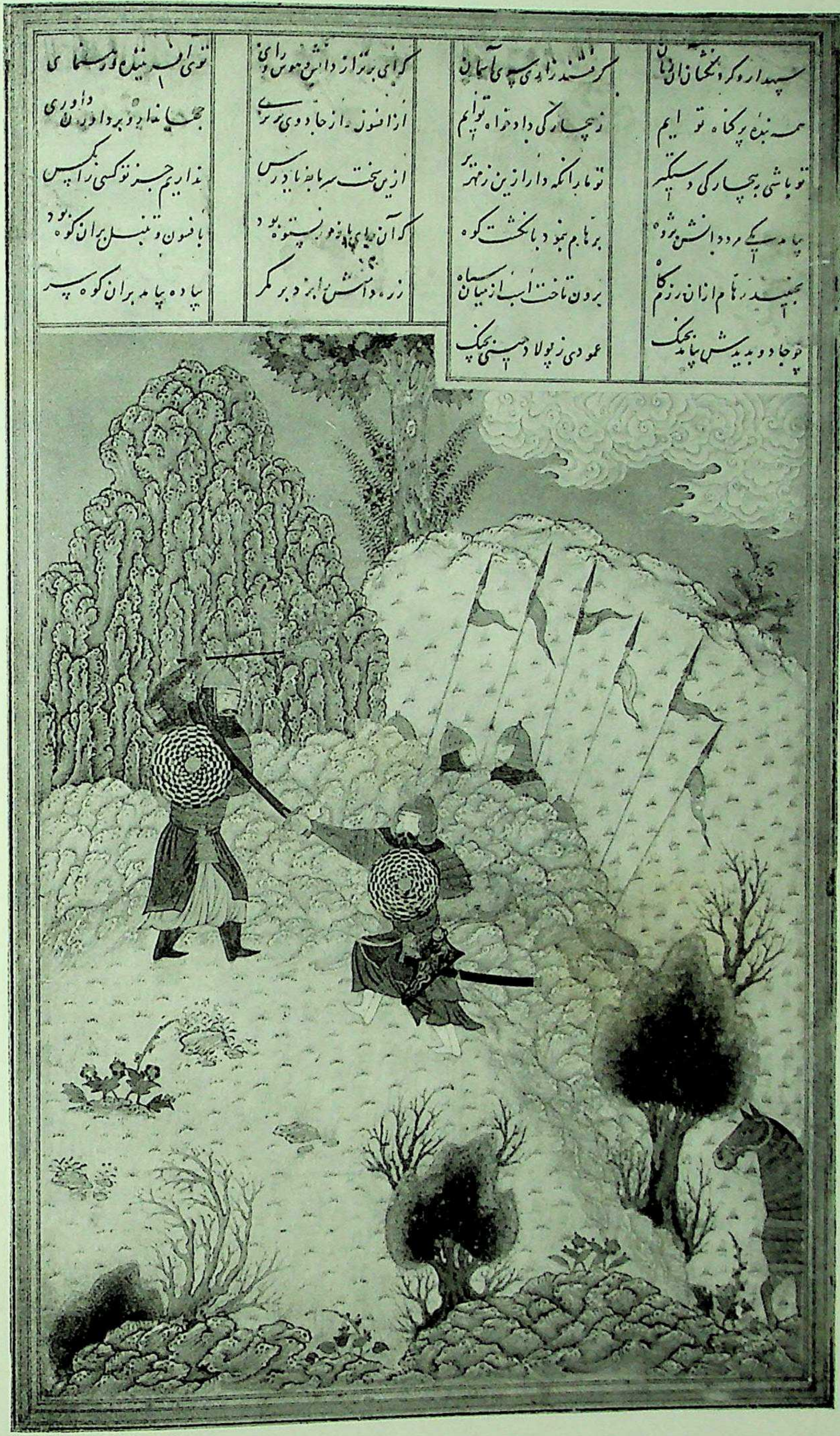
> Swift to his belt the hand of Rustam flew,
> And straight an arrow stout of poplar drew;
>
> Four eagle-plumes it bore, and diamond-bright
> Its tip of iron glittered in the light.
>
> His bow of Chāch a moment he caressed
> Then pulled the deerskin cord athwart his breast.
>
> With left held straight, his right arm curved amain;
> The murmuring bow could scarce endure the strain.

The shaft is loosed and pierces the breast of Ashkabūs,

> While Death and Destiny the feat approve,
> And Heaven's applause reverberates above.

[The illustration is not reproduced.]

IX. RUHHĀM AND THE SORCERER



سپهدار و گردنکشان آن زمان — گرفتند زاری سوی آسمان
همه بنده بر پیشگاه توایم — ز بیچارگی دادخواه توایم
تو باشی به بیچارگی دستگیر — تو ما را نگه دار ازین زمهریر
پیاده یکی مرد دانش پژوه — برآمد بنود با لخت کوه
بجنبید رستم از آن رزمگاه — برون تاخت اسب از میان سپاه
چو جادو بدیدش بیامد بجنگ — عمودی ز پولاد چینی بچنگ

گرای برتر از دانش و هوش و رای — توی آفریننده و رهنمای
از افسون و از جادوی برتری — جهاندار و بر داوران داوری
ازین سخت سر باید یادرس — نداریم جز تو کسی را بکس
که آن دیو پتیاره نستوه بود — بافسون و تنبل بران کوه بود
زره دامنش را بزد بر کمر — پیاده بیامد بران کوه سر

This Homeric episode as described by Firdausī is a very famous one. Sultan Mahmūd is said to have been delighted with the lines, of which the above is an attempt at a rendering. That night Firdausī in a dream met Rustam, fully armed, and with bow in hand; in his gratitude he directed the poet to a hillock in which he said he had buried the neck-piece of Ashkabūs.

Several were in fact found there, which Firdausī divided among the court poets.

Of the third incident in the campaign Rustam is likewise the hero. After performing prodigious exploits he meets the Khān of Chīn, whose arrows fall about him thick as autumn leaves in a storm. But Rustam, bearing his noose of lion's hide, spurs Rakhsh towards the Khān's white elephant. The Khān, roaring like thunder, hurls a dart at Rustam, who flings his noose round the Khān's neck, and drags him to the ground, where he is captured and bound. Finally, after much desperate fighting, Rustam triumphs over the Turanians.

[Plate 10, illustrating this exploit, is full of epic movement.]

¶ *The Stories of Rustam and the Dīv Akvān, and of Bīzhan and Manīzhah*

There came a herdsman before Kai Khusrau, the Shāh, and told him that a savage wild ass was destroying his horses. Now the Shāh knew this was a Demon that had taken the guise of an ass, and he sent for Rustam to fight against him. And Rustam obeyed, and, mounted on Rakhsh his steed, went to meet the Demon and fought with him. But whenever he caught him with his cord he vanished from sight. So after three days and nights Rustam was wearied, and lay down to rest.

Then the Dīv came near; and, loosening the ground where Rustam lay, he lifted it up and flung him into the sea, that crocodiles might destroy him. But Rustam drew his sword, and drove them away, and struggled to the shore. And after finding Rakhsh, who had been caught and kept by the servants of Afrāsiyāb, he slew the herdsmen. Then Afrāsiyāb himself came by, to look on his horses, and Rustam fought with him, and put him to flight. And after that the Dīv came on him again, but Rustam smote him with his mace and killed him.

[The illustration in the manuscript of the Dīv bearing Rustam away is not reproduced.]

One day men from Armania reported that wild boars from Tūrān had come across the border and were devouring their fields. And the young Bīzhan, son of Gīv the

Paladin, asked to be allowed to go against them. Now Gīv would have held him back, for he was reckless of danger; but at last he settled to send him with Gurgīn to bear him company and help him. So they set forth, and came to the forest where the boars lay. And when Bīzhan wished to pursue them Gurgīn held back; and Bīzhan went in alone, and slew them all, and rode back with their heads at his saddle. But Gurgīn, when he met him, was envious; yet he hid his anger, and watched secretly to entrap him.

He told Bīzhan that he knew of a pleasant garden near that place in which Manīzhah, daughter of Afrāsiyāb, and her fairy-faced maidens, all tall as cypresses, were accustomed to make merry among the flowers in the spring season. 'Let us, then,' he said, 'go together to the garden, and carry off some of those Turkman damsels.'

Then Bīzhan's heart took fire, and he listened to Gurgīn's tempting. So they set forth, and when they drew near Bīzhan went on alone and, entering the garden, hid behind a cypress. But Manīzhah espied him from her pavilion, and her heart was filled with love for his beauty, and she sent her nurse to question him. And he went to Manīzhah's pavilion, and she embraced him, and bade her maidens bathe his feet in musk and rose-water, and prepare a feast, with wine in crystal cups, and music of lyre and lute.

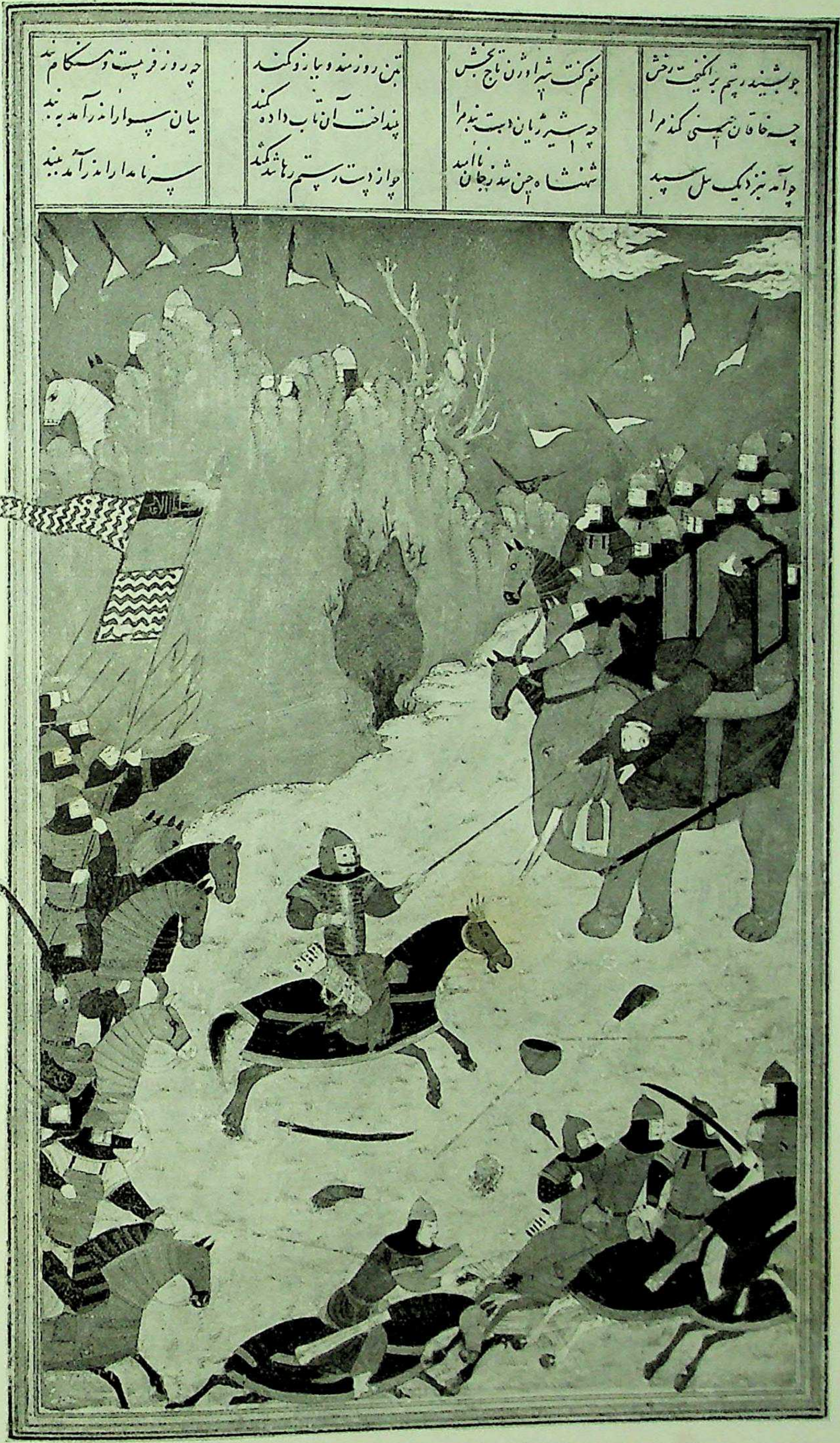
And Bīzhan remained with Manīzhah in the garden for three days and nights. But when the time came for her to return she would not be parted from him, and she gave him wine mixed with a potion that made him senseless, and they bore him on a couch to the house of Afrāsiyāb.

When Bīzhan awoke he wished to return to his own country; but Manīzhah cheered him with her love, and they passed many days together, with merry-making and all delights.

But the time came when a chamberlain learned of Bīzhan's presence, and he brought the news to Afrāsiyāb, and the King was very angry, and sent Garsīvaz his brother to the women's chambers; and Garsīvaz found Bīzhan holding revel among the maidens. Then he seized him, and brought him before the King; and when Afrāsiyāb questioned him he told him that a fairy had borne him sleeping to the palace, and that neither he nor Manīzhah were to blame. But the King would not believe his words, and commanded that he should be hanged on a gibbet for the dishonour that he had brought on his household.

But Pīrān the counsellor chanced at that time to come to do homage to the King; and when he heard of Bīzhan's case he interceded for him, and told the King that war would surely come of it if Bīzhan were slain, and he bade him remember how Siyāvush had been slain, and what evil had resulted. So Afrāsiyāb listened to Pīrān's

X. RUSTAM DRAGS THE KHĀN OF CHĪN FROM HIS ELEPHANT


چو بشنید رستم برانگیخت رخش
منم گفت شیراوژن تاجبخش
تن رودزند و بیازد کمند
چه روز فروبست و هنگام بند
چه خاقان چینی کند مر مرا
چه شیر ژیان و دبت بندم را
بینداخت آن تاب داده کمند
میان سپه واراندر آمد به بند
چو آمد بنزدیک پیل سپید
شهنشاه چین شد زجان ناامید
چو از دست رستم رها شد کمند
سپه نامدار اندر آمد ببند

words; and they fastened heavy chains on Bīzhan, and threw him down into a great pit in a place apart, and closed the opening with the mighty boulder of Akvān the Dīv, conveying it on the backs of elephants. And Manīzhah was stripped of her royal robes, and cast out into that place, so that she might behold the dungeon where Bīzhan was imprisoned.

Then Manīzhah wandered forth with lamentation and weeping; but when she came to the pit she made an opening large enough for her hand to pass. And she used to beg for food from door to door, and pass it through the opening to Bīzhan; so that he did not perish.

Now Gurgīn returned to Īrān, and Gīv, the father of Bīzhan, met him. And Gurgīn lied to Gīv, and told him that a Dīv in the guise of a wild ass had borne off Bīzhan. But when the Shāh questioned him he grew confused, and the Shāh had him put in chains, and sent out horsemen to search for Bīzhan.

But at the feast of Naurūz, Kai Khusrau the Shāh arrayed himself in a garment of Rūm and prayed before Ormazd, and asked for guidance; and afterwards he put on the Kaianian crown, and took up the cup of magic, and gazing therein he scanned all the seven climes for traces of Bīzhan; and at last he espied him in the pit, with a royal maiden attending him. Then the Shāh sent once more for Rustam, and Gīv bore his message. And Rustam obeyed, and came from Zābulistān to the Court of the Shāh; and though he would fain rest from combat, he undertook to deliver Bīzhan. And Gurgīn told Rustam of his fault, and prevailed on him to intercede for him with the Shāh. So the Shāh forgave Gurgīn.

Then Rustam chose from the royal treasury many rich stuffs and brocades, and carpets, and gold, and jewels; and he went forth with seven paladins disguised as merchants; and they journeyed to Tūrān, and he posted an army upon the borders.

And Manīzhah came to Rustam, for she had heard that he brought merchandise from Īrān; and she revealed to him where Bīzhan was kept. And he gave her food, and a fowl, in which he hid the ring that bore his signet, to bear to Bīzhan. And when Bīzhan saw the ring and Rustam's name thereon, he knew that Rustam was come to deliver him; and he laughed aloud, so that Manīzhah marvelled.

Then Manīzhah returned to Rustam; and when it was night she lit a fire of wood that she had gathered, and Rustam was guided by it, and came with his companions to the pit. But though all tried to move the boulder, none could stir it. Then Rustam prayed for strength, and came close to the pit, and spoke with Bīzhan, and interceded for Gurgīn, and Bīzhan forgave Gurgīn.

Then Rustam put forth all his strength against the stone, and lifted it up, and threw it far from him; and he drew Bīzhan out of the pit with a cord, and freed him from his fetters; and bringing him to his house he gave him clothes and refreshed him, for he was wasted with his sufferings.

But after that Rustam sent word to his army, and rode forth with Bīzhan and the other paladins towards the house of Afrāsiyāb. And they slew the guards, and broke into his house; and he fled from before them. But the next day Afrāsiyāb returned at the head of his army, and fought with the army of Rustam; but he was driven back, and again forced to flee.

And the Iranians returned to Kai Khusrau rejoicing, and he gave a great feast in their honour.

[The favourite subject of Rustam's rescue of Bīzhan is illustrated in Plate 11. The convenient fashion of showing the interior of a pit or a well in a cross-section is common to all Persian painting. The illustration is also notable as the figure of Bīzhan has been repainted, manifestly by an Indian artist of ability. The drawing of the features is typical of Mughal painting, which in certain pictorial, as opposed to decorative, qualities shows a definite superiority to fifteenth-century Persian work. The background silhouette is of wierd beauty.]

¶ *The Battle of the Twelve Rukhs*

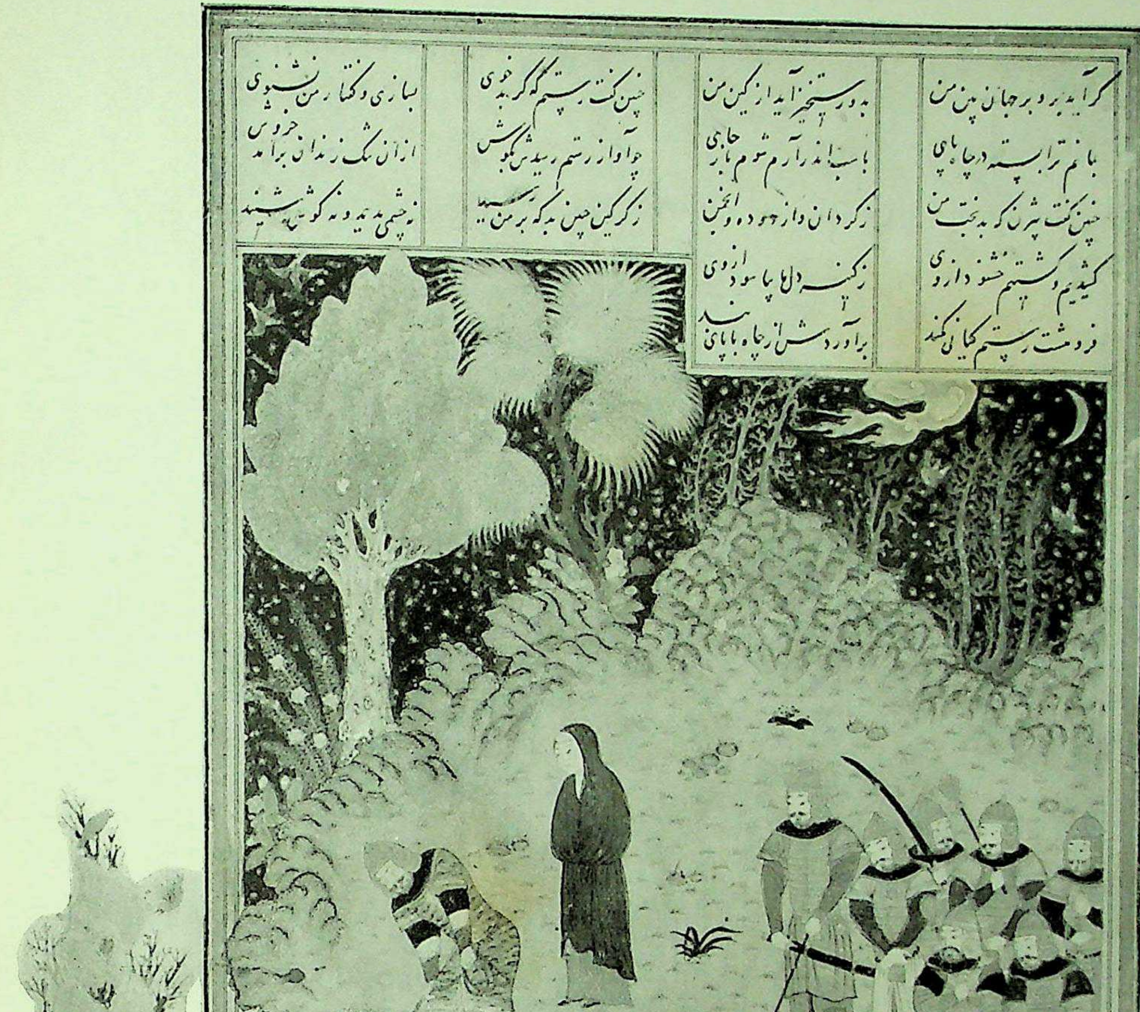
After his defeat Afrāsiyāb returned in rage to his palace, and took counsel with his priests and veterans. And when they had deliberated, letters were sent out to all the vassal chiefs, bidding them assemble their armies for battle to avenge the shame that Rustam had brought upon Tūrān.

Then the King appointed Shīdah, his son, to command the host, and to the aged Pīrān he gave fifty thousand men of Chīn, and warned him to go against Īrān, and speak no word but of war and vengeance, for fire and water could not mingle.

But when the Shāh was told that the Turanians were marching on Īrān he assembled the paladins, and the number of the warriors was so great that the land appeared like a sea with their movement, for the Shāh had ordered that none that could use stirrup or bridle should hold back. And with elephants preceding them, and drums beating, the host moved forth, and Gūdarz was placed at their head, riding on an elephant.

And Gūdarz sent Gīv his son in front to try to win Pīrān over before the battle, for the Shāh had remembered that he had been born in the house of Pīrān, and had received much kindness at his hands. But Pīrān would not listen to the words of Gīv, for to abandon his people in their need, he said, would be the act of a slave, and not a prince.

XI. RUSTAM RESCUES BĪZHAN FROM THE DUNGEON



گر آید بدو بر جهان بین من
بدو رستخیز آید از کین من
چنین گفت رستم که گر بدخوی
بسازی و گفتار من بشنوی

بیابم ترا بسته در چاه پای
به اسب اندر آرم شوم باز جای
چو آواز رستم رسیدش بگوش
از آن تنگ زندان برآمد خروش

چنین گفت بیژن که بدبخت من
ز گردان و از توده و انجمن
ز گرگین چنین بد که بر من رسید
نه چشمی بدید و نه گوشی شنید

کشیدیم و گشتیم خشنود از وی
ز کینه دل ما بیاسود از وی

فرو هشت رستم کیانی کمند
برآوردش از چاه با پای بند

So both sides got ready for battle, and the plains and valleys were darkened with their multitude. And each army waited for the other to attack first, for the country was mountainous, and Pīrān had planned to take the Iranians in the rear if they moved forward. But Gūdarz knew of this, and would not advance. So for three days and nights they waited. And Bīzhan was eager for the fight, and cried out on Gīv his father, and railed at Gūdarz the father of Gīv for holding back; and for all that Gīv answered Bīzhan would not be still. And among the army of Tūrān also Hūmān, the brother of Pīrān, chafed at the delay, and Pīrān could not restrain him, for he would not heed his words. And Hūmān gnashed his teeth with rage, and mounting his horse he rode before the host of Īrān and called on Ruhhām, the son of Gūdarz, to meet him in battle between the armies. But Ruhhām refused his challenge, because Gūdarz had forbidden the armies to engage. Then Hūmān called on Farīburz, and received a like answer. Then he rode before Gūdarz and taunted him and all the Iranians. But Gūdarz likewise would not consent to fight with him. So Hūmān rode back to the Turanians, and on the way, in his anger and insolence, he shot down four horsemen; and the Turanians blew the clarions and exulted.

Then the paladins of Īrān were ashamed, and raged against Hūmān. And when Gūdarz heard their complaints, and saw the impatience of Bīzhan, he smiled upon him, and gave him leave to answer the challenge, and blessed him; and Gīv gave him the arms and horse of Siyāvush.

So the place of meeting was prepared; and when the morning dawned Bīzhan and Hūmān fought together, with arrows first, and spears, till both were weary. But when they had rested they fell to again with swords, and afterwards with maces; and thereafter they grappled together, yet neither could dislodge the other from his horse; and so it continued till the evening. Then Bīzhan prayed for strength, and caught Hūmān in his arms, and raising him aloft flung him to the ground, and drawing his dagger he beheaded him, crying out that Siyāvush was avenged.

Bīzhan's victory over Hūmān, of which the illustration is not here reproduced, is described by Firdausī with great power, and the eleven duels between selected champions which follow are equally celebrated. First, however, there is a pitched battle, in which neither side gains the victory. Gūdarz and Pīrān then agree that, to save bloodshed, the war shall be fought out between picked champions only. Ten are chosen from each side, and Pīrān and Gūdarz lead them out in the morning to a plain between two hills. The victor in each duel plants his enemy's banner on the hill nearest to his army. After all the ten Iranians have been victorious, the aged Gūdarz and Pīrān meet, and at last Pīrān is slain. When the eleventh flag is planted on the hill, the Iranians beat the drums of triumph, while the Turkmans bewail the noble Pīrān's death.

Two of their chiefs, Lahhāk and Farshīdward, are making their way back to Tūrān when they are overtaken by the Iranian champion Gustaham, who fights with and slays them in turn. The second fight is illustrated in the manuscript.

Meanwhile, Kai Khusrau rides out to his victorious army; but after praising God for the victory he sees the body of Pīrān, and remembering his kindness, weeps over his fate. Then he causes a lofty tomb to be built for him, and sets up Pīrān's body, wearing a crown and clad in brocades, on a throne, with the other dead Turanian knights beside him.

¶ *The End of the Feud*

When Afrāsiyāb was told of the death of Pīrān and the other paladins he vowed that he would take no rest until he had avenged them. So he assembled his armies yet again; and the Iranians also were mustered for battle. Yet Afrāsiyāb, in his guile, sent a letter to Kai Khusrau, and promised him a great recompense in land and treasure if he would consent to make a peace; but Kai Khusrau refused the proposal, for Rustam counselled him against it; and instead he challenged Shīdah, son of Afrāsiyāb, to fight; and seizing him as a lion seizes a wild ass, he flung him down and stabbed him with his dagger, so that he died. Then the two hosts came out to battle, and the army of Afrāsiyāb was put to flight, and fled across the Jīhūn, leaving their tents empty; and all their great ones were slain. And Afrāsiyāb stayed in Gang-bihisht, where was a lofty palace which he had built, to refresh himself with his hawks and hunting-leopards:

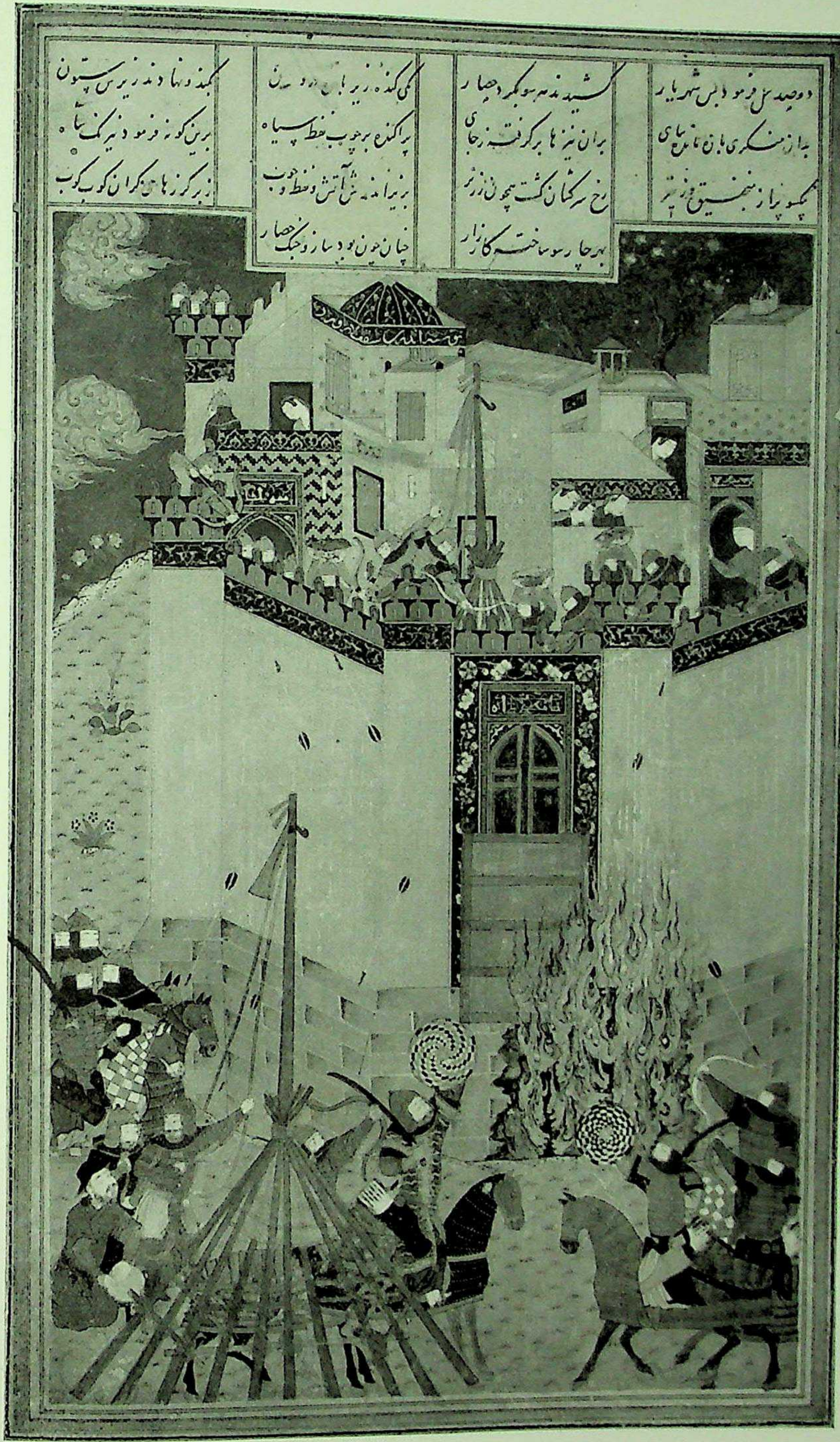
> To him its soil was musk, its bricks were gold.

But when he had tidings that the Iranians had not desisted he placed out sentinels on the battlements, and posted troops at every gate under trusted chieftains, for he feared that his army would be outnumbered. And on the walls he set catapults, and fortified the approaches with great boulders:

> All the towers were filled
> With coats of mail and helms. He kept a troop
> Of smiths at work to fashion claws of steel
> On every side and bind them on long spears
> To grapple any that adventured nigh.

Then, resting from his preparations, he tried to banish his cares with wine and music.

XII. THE SIEGE OF GANG-BIHISHT


دوصد سنگ فرمود پس شهریار
به بازو فکرهای ناخن نمای
بیکسو به پا ز منجنیق و تیر
کشیدند سوی دگر حصار
بران تیزها برگرفته ز جای
رخ سرکشان گشت همچون زریر
به هر جا رسو ساخته کارزار
کمی کنده زیر باره درون
پراکند بر چوب نفط سیاه
بزیر اندرش آتش و نفط و چوب
چنان چون بود ساز جنگ حصار
بکندند بنیاد زیرش ستون
برین گونه فرمود زیرک سپاه
ز بس گرزهای گران کوب کوب

But Kai Khusrau and Rustam came on apace, and arrived before the city, and beleaguered it. Then Afrāsiyāb sent a messenger to the Shāh, and swore that he repented of shedding the blood of the noble Siyāvush, and that if the Shāh, his own daughter's son, would put revenge from his heart, he might take back all that Tūr, son of Farīdūn, had stolen from Īraj. Many more promises also did he make him: yet Kai Khusrau would not lend ear to his words. For all the troubles of Īrān sprang from Tūr, and ever since the reign of Manūchihr, Afrāsiyāb had been led by Āhriman, and his crimes were greater in number than the days of his life. And the Shāh said, 'I will strive against him with all my strength, and God will guide my hand aright'.

So when the sun rose he ordered his armies to attack on four sides, with catapults and engines of war and mines and elephants. And they made a breach in the walls, and entering in they slew many of the Turkmans, and carried the women and children to captivity.

But Afrāsiyāb came out upon the roof of the palace, and when he saw that all his host that were not slain were in flight, he escaped by a secret passage underneath the castle; and joining with the army of the Faghfūr of Chīn he went again against the Iranians, and again he was overcome. And he fled away alone, and wandered over many countries; but the Shāh did not leave off pursuing him. Then Afrāsiyāb came on a cavern upon a mountain top, and he went in to rest, for he was weary, and could not sleep for fear. Then he cried aloud to God in his distress, and a hermit heard his crying, and went and caught the King in a noose; and they brought him before the Shāh; and the Shāh slew Afrāsiyāb and Garsīvaz, his brother, with his own hand. So the blood of Siyāvush was avenged in the end, and the earth was delivered from the seed of the serpent.

[Plate 12 shows the siege of Gang-bihisht, with Rustam prominent among the besieging army. The fight is being carried on with catapults and arrows, and the garrison are hurling down boulders on their assailants, while the women look on in alarm, for the fire, by which the breach is made, has burned high. The brick-red castle is painted with minute care, each brick being separately delineated.]

¶ *The Passing of Kai Khusrau*

When Kai Kā'ūs knew that vengeance was accomplished he gave thanks to God, and after no long time he died, for he was old and weary of life. And Kai Khusrau, his grandson, reigned for sixty years, and all the world was at peace and obeyed his authority.

But the Shāh fell into a melancholy, and feared that he might grow proud in spirit because of his power. And he prayed to God that he might be taken in the midst of his prosperity, ere pride should conquer his heart. And for seven days he prayed in an inner chamber, and none was admitted to his presence; so that the paladins were astonished, and could not understand why darkness of spirit had come upon him. And they sent Gīv to Zābulistān to call Zāl and Rustam to counsel the Shāh; and they came as they were bidden.

But Kai Khusrau came out from his chamber and sat on his throne. And the paladins questioned him; and he told them that his heart had a desire that would not be satisfied, and that when the time came he would make it known to them. Then he went again to his chamber, and pleaded alone with God for the space of five weeks. And the Surūsh, the messenger of God, came to him in a dream and comforted him, and bade him bestow his goods and his treasure on his kindred and on the destitute, and choose a fitting ruler in his place, for the time for his departure was at hand. And the Shāh obeyed, and made ready for his going. But Zāl, the aged, admonished him, and said that a Dīv had possessed the Shāh because he had withdrawn from the sight of his nobles. But Kai Khusrau reasoned with Zāl, and Zāl wept before him and asked his forgiveness; and he embraced Zāl and forgave him.

Then Kai Khusrau sat on his throne and spoke to his army, and apportioned his goods and treasure among the paladins and all the Iranians:

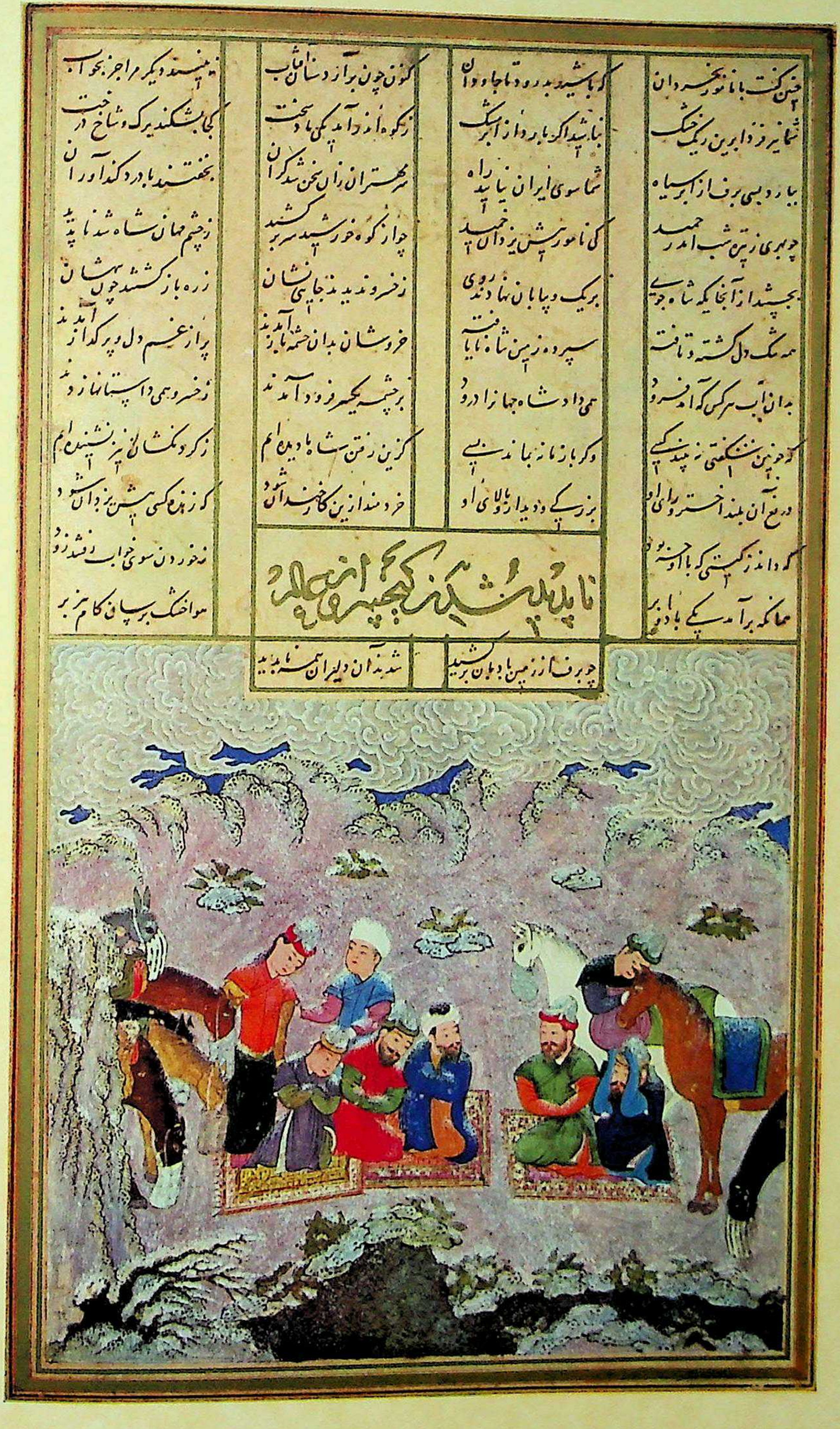
> To every one that hath borne toil with me
> Will I give treasure equal to his wish,
> And speak to God, who heareth what is good,
> For them whom I approve.

Then when he had ordered all his affairs he came down from the throne, and called Luhrāsp before him, and resigned the Kingship to him. Now Luhrāsp was of the race of Hūshang. And the Shāh gave his women into the charge of Luhrāsp.

Then Kai Khusrau mounted on his horse Bihzād, and rode into the mountains. And there accompanied him eight paladins, Zāl and Rustam, Gūdarz and Gīv, Bīzhan and Gustaham, Tūs and Farīburz. And they ascended a mountain, and at the end of seven days Kai Khusrau bade the paladins turn back. But only Zāl and Rustam and Gūdarz obeyed him. And after another day they halted on a ridge of the mountain, by a stream of water, for they were wearied. And Kai Khusrau said to them that his time was come; and he bathed in the stream, and recited the Avesta. And he warned the paladins to return as soon as the sun should rise, for a great storm of snow would descend upon them from the mountains.

Now when the sun rose the Shāh was gone from among them, and there was no

XIII. THE PALADINS IN THE SNOW-STORM



چنین گفت با نامور بخردان
که باشید بدرود تا جاودان
کنون چون برآید سنان آفتاب
نبینید دیگر مرا جز بخواب
شما نیز فردا برین ریگ خشک
نباشید اگر بارد از ابر مشک
ز کوه اندر آید یکی باد سخت
کجا بشکند برگ و شاخ درخت
ببارد بسی برف از ابر سیاه
شما سوی ایران نیابید راه
سر مهتران زان سخن شد گران
بخفتند با درد و کند آوران
چو بهری ز تیره شب اندر چمید
کی نامور پیش یزدان خمید
چو از کوه خورشید سر بر کشید
ز چشم جهان شاه شد ناپدید
بجستند از آنجایگه شاه جوی
بریگ و بیابان نهادند روی
ز خسرو ندیدند جایی نشان
ز ره بازگشتند چون بیهشان
همه تنگدل گشته و تافته
سپرده زمین شاه نایافته
خروشان بدان چشمه باز آمدند
پر از غم دل و پر گداز آمدند
بدان آب هر کس که آمد فرود
همی داد شاه جهان را درود
بر چشمه یکسر فرود آمدند
ز خسرو همی داستانها زدند
که چون این شگفتی نه بیند کسی
وگر باز ماند بماند بسی
کزین رفتن شاه دیده ایم
ز گردنکشان نیز نشنیده ایم
دریغ آن بلند اختر و رای او
بزرگی و دیدار و بالای او
خردمند ازین کار خندان شود
که زنده کسی پیش یزدان شود

ناپدید شدن کیخسرو از عالم

که داند ز گیتی که با او چه بود
نخوردند و سوی خواب رفتند زود
همانگه برآمد یکی باد و ابر
هوا خشک بر سان کام هزبر
چو برف از زمین بادبان بر کشید
شدند آن دلیران همه ناپدید

trace of him. And they were as men distraught; and they sat down again by the stream, and conversed together of the Shāh and his greatness. But at last they fell asleep.

Meanwhile, there came up great storm-clouds, and the snow fell and covered them. And they struggled against it, and tried to make a shelter, but it overcame them at the last and they perished.

[The huddled bewilderment of the doomed paladins, crouching coldly by the desolate mountain stream under the overwhelming snow-cloud, is wonderfully expressed in the illustration of this incident, which, both in its realistic drawing and its colour-scheme, would be hard to parallel elsewhere (Plate 13).]

¶ *The Story of Gushtāsp*

So Luhrāsp sat on the ivory throne of Kai Khusrau, and he did justice to all men, and his name was honoured in far countries. Yet Luhrāsp was neglectful of his sons, and bestowed his favour on the grandsons of Kai Kā'ūs, so that Gushtāsp, his elder son, was filled with resentment; and leaving the presence of his father, he departed, and journeyed to the land of Rūm, and there sought employment, but found none; therefore he sorrowed exceedingly. But a certain nobleman that dwelt near Caesar's city took pity on Gushtāsp, and entertained him kindly, and lodged him in his house until such time as he should find service.

Now Caesar had three daughters, and the eldest was named Katāyūn. And Katāyūn dreamed a dream that a certain wanderer appeared to her among a throng of men; and she gave him a posy of flowers, and he took it from her. And in the morning Caesar called together all the princes and nobles; and the princess walked among them bearing fresh hyacinths; for it was the custom for the daughter of Caesar to offer flowers in the assembly to whomsoever she chose for her husband. Yet Katāyūn would not choose any of them on that day. And the next day Gushtāsp came to the palace, and sat apart in sorrow from the rest. And when the princess saw him she knew him because of her dream, and came and gave him the flowers. So the King bestowed her on Gushtāsp, yet refused her a dowry; for he did not know Gushtāsp, that he was the son of the Shāh Luhrāsp. And Gushtāsp went to dwell outside the city, for the King would not receive him.

Now a certain Rūman noble sought the second daughter of Caesar in marriage; but Caesar would not grant his daughter leave to choose her husband, and he ordered that he should first perform a deed of prowess to show his worthiness; and bade him slay a great wolf. But that noble was afraid, and he prevailed on Gushtāsp to go secretly in his stead; and Gushtāsp went out and slew the wolf. So Caesar bestowed his daughter on that noble, for he saw the wolf's body when it was slain, and thought he had overcome it.

And in the same way Gushtāsp slew a great dragon in the name of another noble of Rūm, to enable him to win the third daughter of Caesar.

Now there was a great meadow by the palace of Caesar, where the two nobles used to play at polo, and practise archery and other sports. And Katāyūn asked Gushtāsp to go with them, to distract him from his melancholy. So Gushtāsp rode with the princes; and taking a polo-stick he struck the ball with such strength that it vanished from men's sight. And in archery also and riding he showed his prowess, so that Caesar noticed him, and summoning him, asked him of his lineage and country. And Gushtāsp answered him that he was that stranger to whom Caesar had given his daughter Katāyūn. Then Caesar asked forgiveness of both of them, and seated Gushtāsp beside him on his throne, and commanded that all his people should do his bidding. Yet Gushtāsp concealed his name from Caesar.

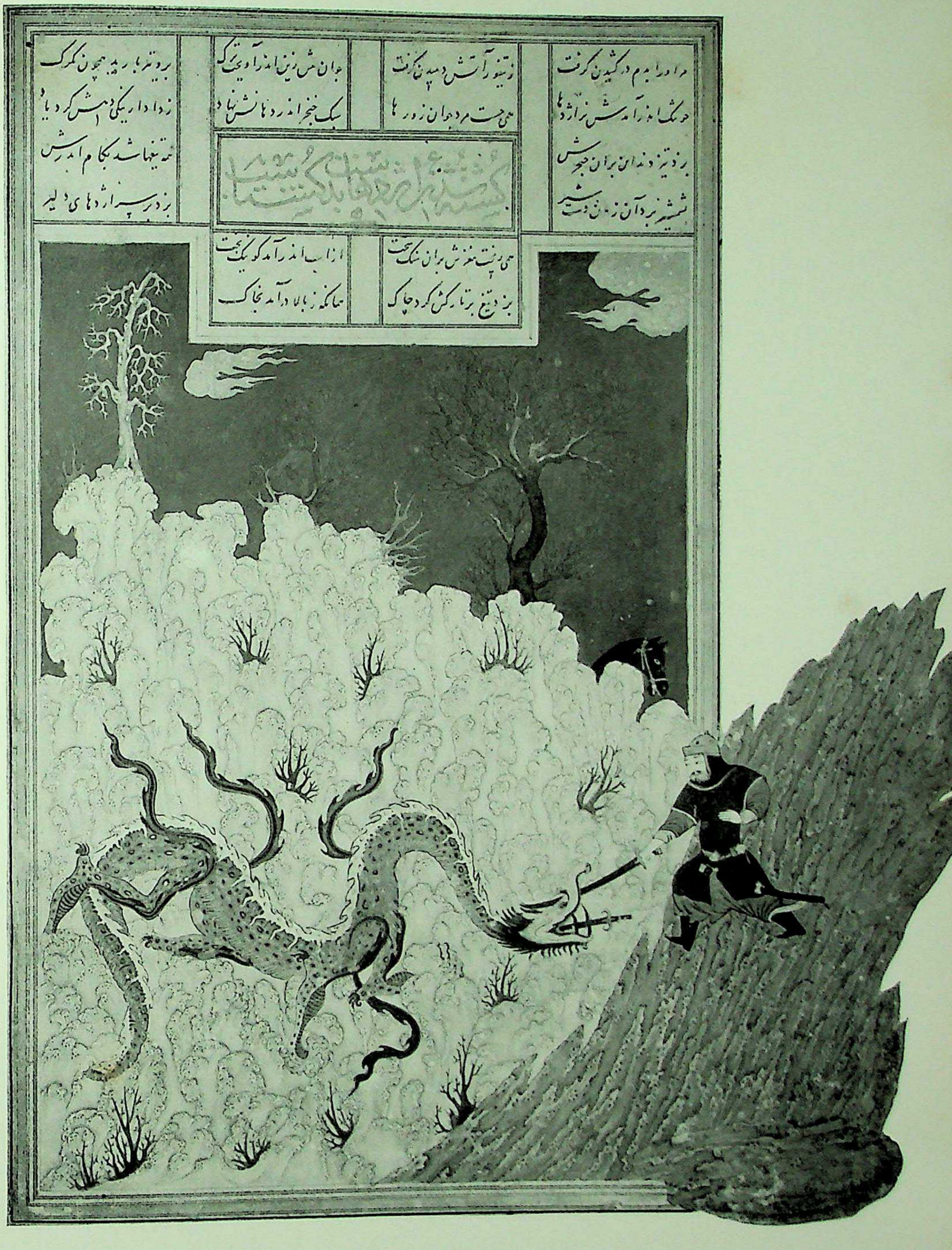
Now Caesar sent an envoy to the Court of Luhrāsp, the Shāh, and demanded tribute from Īrān, and afterwards he sent Gushtāsp also to negotiate, for Luhrāsp refused to pay tribute. But when Gushtāsp came to Īrān the people went out to meet him, and the paladins, when they knew him, welcomed him, and hailed him as Shāh. And when Gushtāsp saw that they loved him he sent a message to Caesar that the matter had been arranged with Īrān. Then Caesar rode out and found Gushtāsp among the paladins, and learned that he was the son of Luhrāsp. So Caesar sent Katāyūn to Gushtāsp, with gifts of slaves and brocades and jewels, and Caesar and Gushtāsp swore an oath of friendship together.

Then Gushtāsp journeyed to Īrān, and Luhrāsp came with a great host to welcome him, and embraced him; and Luhrāsp resigned the throne to Gushtāsp, and crowned him as Shāh in his place.

Gushtāsp's romantic adventures, of which an outline is given above, are interesting for the fact that the custom of a maiden choosing her husband in open assembly is the same as the *Svayamvara* of India, as illustrated, for instance, in the well-known story of Nala and Damayantī.

[Two incidents of the story are illustrated in this manuscript. The first picture, of Gushtāsp's fight with the dragon, is reproduced in Plate 14. Firdausī tells us that Gushtāsp first thrust his sword down the dragon's maw, and then finished it off with another sword. The fearsome beast itself (a form borrowed from the Far East), the expressive, leafless trees and shrubs, and the desolation of the strange rocks, are all conceived in a spirit of wild romance.

XIV. GUSHTĀSP SLAYS THE DRAGON



درا ورا بدم درکشیدن گرفت
ز تیر و آتش دمیدن گرفت
جوان مش زین اندر آویخت ترگ
برو تیر بارید همچون تگرگ
چو تنگ اندر آمدش نر اژدها
همی جست مرد جوان زو رها
سبک خنجر اندر دهانش نهاد
ز دادار نیکی دهش کرد یاد

کشته شدن اژدها بدست گشتاسب

بزد تیز دندان بران خنجرش
همه تیغها شد بکام اندرش
بشمشیر برد آن زمان دست شیر
بزد بر سر اژدهای دلیر
همی ریخت مغزش بران سنگ سخت
از اسب اندر آمد گو نیکبخت
بزد تیغ بر تارکش کرد چاک
همانگه ز بالا درآمد بخاک

In the second, the hero is shown at polo (Plate 15), with Caesar looking on. There is good authority for believing that the game was played before Sasanian times, while the Sasanian monarchs, and even their ladies, seem to have been keen enthusiasts. The painting has been considerably touched up, probably in India.]

¶ *The Exploits of Isfandiyār*

In the days when Gushtāsp ruled over Īrān, there appeared in the land the prophet Zardusht,[1] the slayer of Āhriman, and the Shāh accepted the new faith of the prophet; and he taught it to the people.

But Arjāsp, the King of Tūrān, was hostile to the Word of Zardusht, and he sent to Gushtāsp, and bade him make ready for war. But Gushtāsp wrote him a fitting answer, and swore that he would trample down the head of Arjāsp and destroy him.

So Gushtāsp arrayed his armies, and appointed his son Isfandiyār to command one of them. And the battle between the two hosts continued for the space of two weeks without abatement. And the brother of Gushtāsp was slain, and his standard taken. And the battle swayed this way and that, but at last the hosts of Tūrān were smitten and driven back. Now when the Kings of East and West heard that Arjāsp was worsted they sent tribute to Gushtāsp, and he bestowed on Isfandiyār a golden crown; yet he said to him that the time was not yet come for him to possess the throne.

But a certain noble that had an enmity with the Prince spoke evil against him, and said of him that he coveted the throne of his father; so that Gushtāsp feared Isfandiyār, and set chains on him, and had him cast into a dungeon.

Then Arjāsp assembled his armies a second time, and marched upon Balkh, and put to death the aged Shāh Luhrāsp, and led the daughters of Gushtāsp into captivity, and destroyed the house of Zardusht the prophet. And when Gushtāsp heard of it he marched against the Turanians, and fought with the army of Arjāsp for three days; but he was put to flight, and fled with his paladins to a mountain. And they counselled him to release Isfandiyār, that he might deliver them. So he sent word that he should be released. Then Isfandiyār went before Gushtāsp his father, and the Shāh swore to him that if he should win the victory over Arjāsp he would surrender the throne to him. So Isfandiyār went forth like a lion and drove back the armies of Arjāsp from the borders of Īrān.

But the Shāh postponed the fulfilment of his oath, and reproached Isfandiyār for rejoicing while his sisters were in captivity. And he swore that when Isfandiyār had delivered them from the Turkmans he would resign the throne, and make no longer delay, and Isfandiyār should reign in his place. And Isfandiyār swore that he would deliver them.

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[1] Zoroaster.

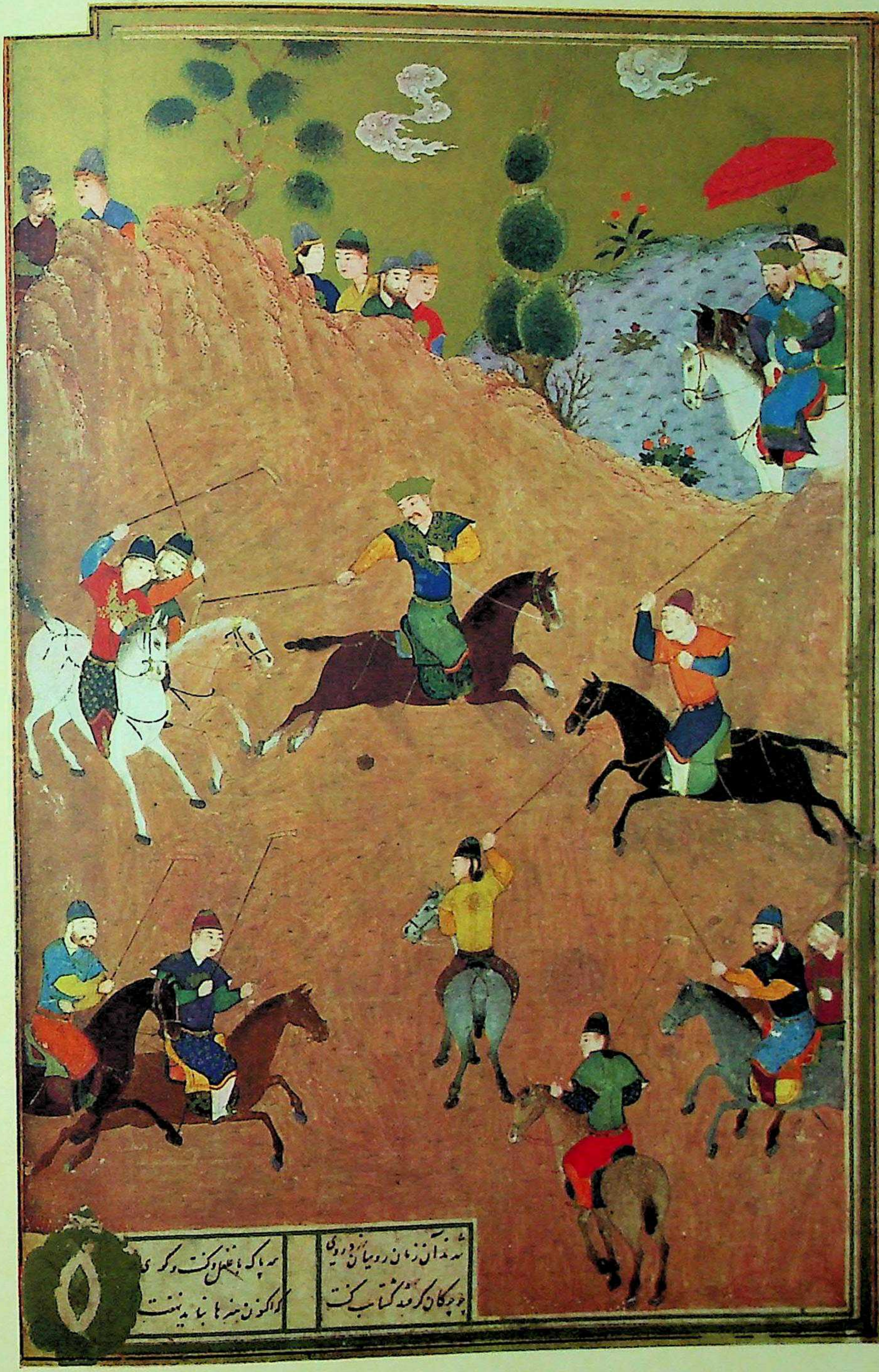
Now the sisters of Isfandiyār were imprisoned by Arjāsp in the Iron Fortress, and there were three roads that led to that place. The first was easy, and required three months to traverse; and the second required two months, but the way lay by a desert where there was no water. And the third way was but a seven days' journey, yet it was beset with dangers of every kind. But Isfandiyār chose the third road, for he did not fear death.

Now in each of the seven stages was a separate danger; and no man had ever been able to overcome them. In the first were two great wolves, with horns and tusks; and in the second were two lions; in the third, a dragon that breathed out fire; in the fourth, a witch, who tempted Isfandiyār in the guise of a Turkman maiden; in the fifth, a Sīmurgh as great as a mountain; in the sixth, snow and tempest; in the seventh, a deep torrent. But Isfandiyār overcame all these dangers. And when he had crossed the torrent he ascended a height, and looked out towards the Fortress. Then he saw that it was compassed with iron, and that the wall was so broad that four mounted men could ride abreast upon it. And he lamented, because he recognized that it could not be taken by storming. So he considered how he should win an entrance; and he dressed himself in the garments of a merchant, and loaded camels with gold and brocades, and concealed a company of warriors in chests, and bound them on camels. Then Arjāsp admitted him into the castle, that he might view the merchandise. And when they were within, Isfandiyār won the favour of Arjāsp. And he gave a feast to the chiefs of the army, and made them drunk with wine; and when they were bemused he sent signals to the general of the host outside the walls, that he should assault the fortress. Then Isfandiyār unfastened the chests, and posted in the strong places of the fortress his chosen warriors that he had brought with him in the chests. And Isfandiyār put on his armour of mail and went swiftly to the palace of Arjāsp. Now Arjāsp was sleeping, but he awoke, and the two fought together, with swords and daggers; and Isfandiyār slew Arjāsp. And the army within and without overcame the garrison, and slew them; and they sacked the treasury of Arjāsp. And Isfandiyār delivered his sisters from the Iron Fortress, and returned, and came into the presence of Gushtāsp his father. And the Shāh welcomed him with joy, and held a great feast in his honour.

[The manuscript contains two illustrations of incidents in Gushtāsp's war with Tūrān. The first, of the battle between Gushtāsp and Arjāsp, is not reproduced here.

The subject of the second (Plate 16) is the slaying of Arjāsp by Isfandiyār. The Iron Fortress is viewed from the air, in the Far Eastern manner, a difficult recessive

XV. GUSHTĀSP PLAYING POLO


شدند آن زمان رومیان زرد روی
چو چوگان گرفتند گشتاسب گفت
همه پاک با غلغل و گفت و گوی
که اکنون هنرها نباید نهفت
٥

effect being successfully achieved. It is a real castle of romance, perched at a giddy height above tall rocks of green and purple. The inner buildings are painted in brick-red and salmon-pink of several tones. The main gate is golden, with azure, green, and gold ornament. Soldiers line the green battlements, and the women look on, terrified, at the central drama.]

¶ *The Conflict of Isfandiyār and Rustam*

Rustam and Isfandiyār are the two chief heroes of the national legend, and the similarity of their early adventures is obvious. While, however, Rustam is a true figure of popular legend, Isfandiyār's prowess has been glorified by priestly embellishments. His Seven Courses are more difficult than Rustam's, and his achievements a little more brilliant. Rustam, for instance, has a habit of going to sleep at critical moments! Moreover, Isfandiyār actually slays the Sīmurgh, the guardian of the fortunes of Rustam's family. This, however, was too much for popular belief, which refused to acquiesce in its death, and it survives to help Rustam to win the victory over his rival.[1] As a counterpoise to this we are told that Rustam was fated to suffer in the next world for killing the champion of orthodoxy. The story of the conflict between the two heroes, as told by Firdausī, thus represents a compromise between the rival claims of the popular and the priestly traditions.

Now Isfandiyār longed for the throne that Gushtāsp his father had promised to him, and he came before him yet again, and demanded the fulfilment of the promise. But Gushtāsp was not willing to abandon his authority, and in his guile he answered his son, and praised him for his deeds of prowess, telling him that he had no peer save Rustam, son of Zāl. Yet Rustam, in his pride, scorned to call himself subject to the Shāh, and therefore Isfandiyār must go against Rustam and bring him bound into his presence. And Gushtāsp swore that, when Rustam was humbled before him, he would no longer hold back from his promise.

Then Isfandiyār pleaded with his father on account of the help that Rustam had given to the Shāhs of old. But Gushtāsp would not listen to him. And Isfandiyār swore that he cared no longer for the throne, yet he would obey, and do as the Shāh commanded.

So Isfandiyār went away in sorrow, and journeyed to Zābulistān, and a great host accompanied him. And he sent his son Bahman before him, and bade him go to Rustam and greet him courteously, and tell him that Gushtāsp was vexed because Rustam withheld the tribute, and came not to the Court; and how the Shāh had commanded Isfandiyār to bring him in chains before him. And he said, 'Tell Rustam also that I swear that I will make the Shāh repent of his command, yet for the present I dare not disobey him.'

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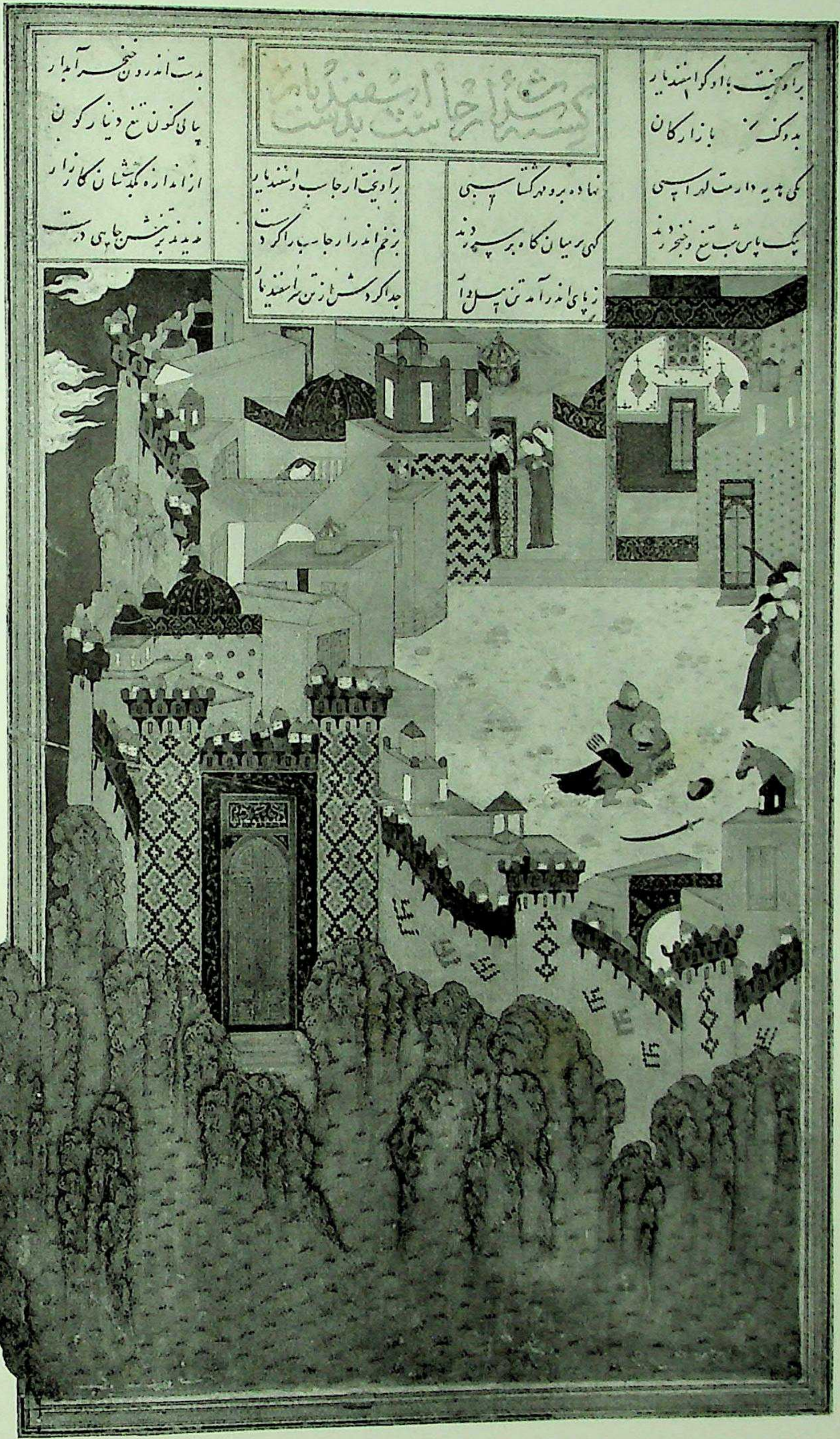
[1] *Warner*, vol. v, pp. 116–18.

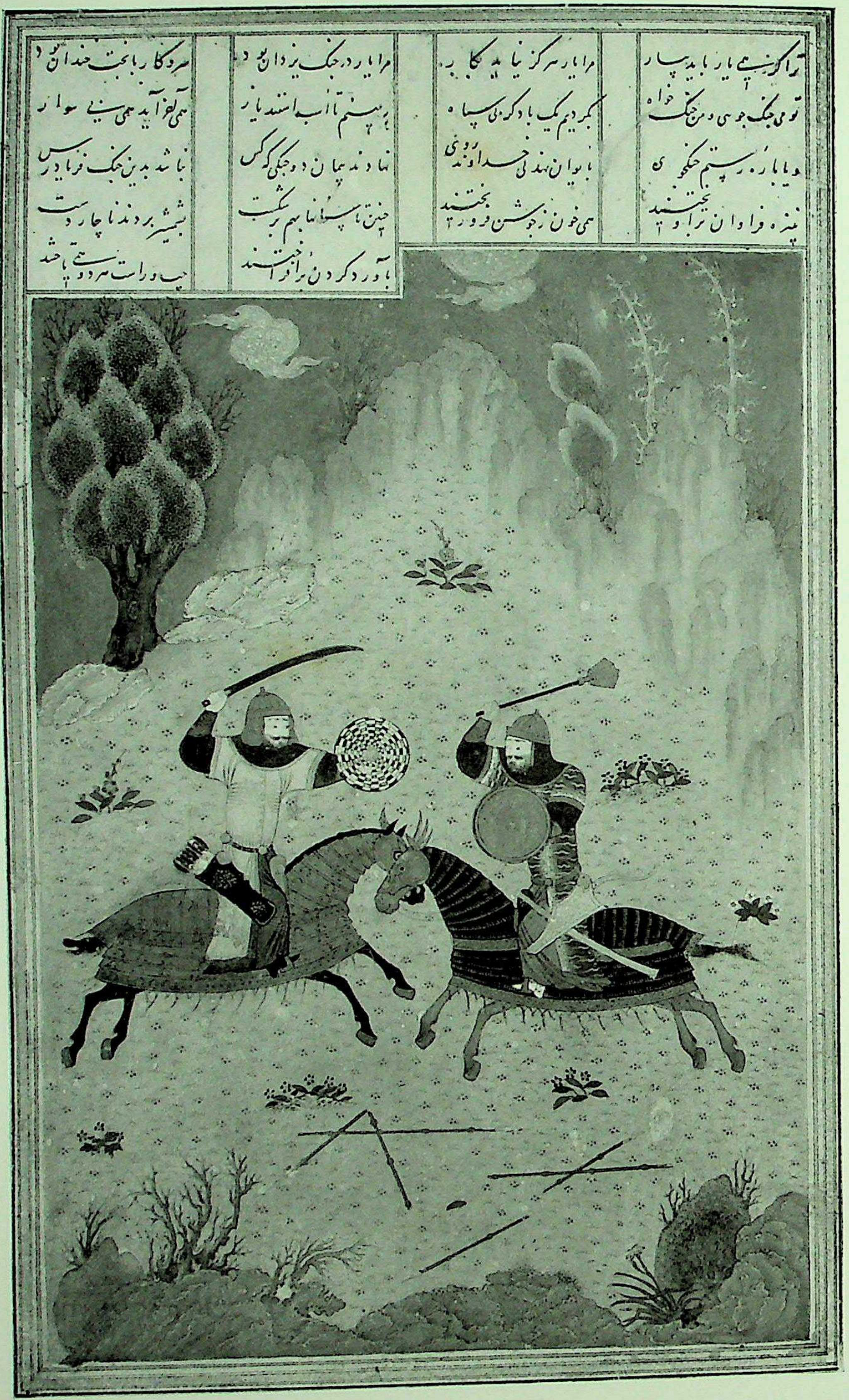
Then Bahman went on ahead to Zābulistān; and Zāl, the father of Rustam, came to meet him. And Zāl invited Bahman to come in and take wine, and rest, for Rustam was gone to the chase. But Bahman would not tarry, and went to seek Rustam. And he came to a place among the hills from where he looked down and beheld a man, as huge as a mountain, that held a sapling in his hand, and a wild ass, spitted, that he was roasting for his supper. And in his other hand he held a cup of wine. And Bahman knew that he was Rustam, and he marvelled at his strength, and feared that Isfandiyār could not stand against him. Then he loosed a boulder from the mountain, and sent it down upon Rustam to kill him. But Rustam was warned, and without moving from that place he lifted his foot and sent the stone far from him. And afterwards he greeted Bahman courteously, and Bahman told him the message that he had brought. And when Rustam had heard it, he bade Bahman take back a courteous answer to Isfandiyār, the lion-hearted, yet to warn him that none should ever behold Rustam fettered, for to seek to fetter the wind were foolishness. Yet if Isfandiyār would honour him, and come to his house, they would feast together, and afterwards he would accompany him to Īrān and ask pardon of Gushtāsp the Shāh.

Then Rustam sent a messenger to Rūdābah, his mother, and bade her make ready an entertainment. And when Isfandiyār received the message of Rustam he rode to meet him. And Rustam alighted from Rakhsh, his horse, and greeted Isfandiyār, and praised him, for he saw that he resembled Siyāvush. And Isfandiyār embraced Rustam, and praised that chief of paladins. Then Rustam invited him to his house, but Isfandiyār refused him, and pleaded that he must obey the commandment of the Shāh, and that he might not feast in the house of Rustam. Yet for one day he consented to tarry, and to pass the time in feasting, if Rustam would come to his encampment as his guest. And Rustam consented, and went to put off his hunting-dress; and he bade Isfandiyār send to summon him when the banquet was ready.

But when Rustam was gone, Isfandiyār repented of his invitation, for he considered that he had acted too lightly, and that it would be unseemly for them to feast together. And he bade the cooks serve the feast, yet sent no summons to Rustam. And he seated himself, and drank to the honour of the Shāh. But Rustam waited for the summons, and after a long time, when no messenger came, he feasted in his own home. And after that he mounted on Rakhsh, and rode in anger to the encampment of Isfandiyār, and came before him, and reproached him. And Isfandiyār made excuses, and pressed him to come in and refresh himself. So Rustam consented, and

XVI. ISFANDIYĀR SLAYS ARJĀSP IN THE IRON FORTRESS


کشته شدن ارجاسپ بدست اسفندیار
برآویخت با او گو اسفندیار
بدو گفت کز بازارگان
کی هدیه داری ز لهراسپی
بیک پاس شب تیغ و خنجر زدند
نهاده برو مهر گشتاسپی
کهی در میان گاه بر سپر زدند
ز پای اندر آمد تن پیلوار
برآویخت ارجاسپ و اسفندیار
بزخم اندر ارجاسپ را کرد سست
جدا کرد دستش از تن سر اسفندیار
بدست اندرون خنجر آبدار
بپای گون تیغ دینار گون
از اندازه بگذشتشان کارزار
ندیدند بر تنش جای درست



ترا گر همی یار باید سوار
مرا یار هرگز نیاید بکار
مرا یار در جنگ یزدان بود
سر و کار با بخت خندان بود

تو می جنگ جویی و من جنگ خواه
بگردیم یک با دگر بی سپاه
ببینیم تا اسب اسفندیار
همی آخور آید همی بی سوار

و یا باره رستم جنگجوی
بایوان نهد بی خداوند روی
نهادند پیمان دو جنگی که کس
نباشد بدین جنگ فریادرس

بنیزه فراوان برآویختند
همی خون ز جوشن فرو ریختند
چنین تا سنانها بهم بر شکست
بشمشیر بردند ناچار دست

بآوردگردن برافراختند
چپ و راست هردو همی تاختند

XVII. THE FIGHT BETWEEN RUSTAM AND ISFANDIYĀR

entered in to drink wine with Isfandiyār, but his heart was aflame with anger. And while they were seated Isfandiyār's spirit was changed, and he spoke evil of Zāl, the father of Rustam, and of Sām, and of the Sīmurgh in whose nest Zāl was reared. But Rustam repudiated his words and reproached him, and vaunted his ancestry and his prowess. And Isfandiyār answered him in like wise.

So they contested with words, and made a trial of strength also, gripping hands together, that gall and blood flowed from their fingers, and they swore to fight on the next day.

Then they ate and drank together, and all the paladins were amazed at the hunger and thirst of Rustam. But when it was time to depart, Rustam again besought Isfandiyār to give up the thought of fighting, for Gushtāsp intended to destroy him in sending him to bind the mighty Rustam. But Isfandiyār would not listen to his words, and would not be hindered from his purpose. So Rustam went to Zāl, his father, and in sadness they conversed together until the morning.

But when the day was come Rustam donned his armour and his tiger-skin, and rode forth upon Rakhsh to the tents of Isfandiyār, and challenged him to battle. And Isfandiyār rode out to meet him, and Rustam besought him once again to stand aside from fighting, that they might command the armies to engage, and the matter be so decided. But Isfandiyār scorned his words.

Then Rustam and Isfandiyār fought together with lances, until the points of the lances were broken; and after that with swords, until they were shattered also. Then they drew forth their maces, and the blows were like the falling of great stones upon the mountain side, so that the maces broke. Then they seized one another, and each put forth his strength to drag the other from his horse, but neither could move his adversary. And at last they fought with bows and arrows; yet the arrows of Rustam could not harm Isfandiyār, the brazen-bodied, for he was invulnerable by reason of a charm that Zardusht had given him; but Rustam, and Rakhsh his horse, were wounded many times, and grew weak with their wounds.

Then Rustam turned from the fight, and came to his palace. And Zāl, his father, lamented over his wounds; yet he bethought him of the Sīmurgh, and he climbed on a hill, and drew forth a feather that the Sīmurgh had given him, and burnt it in the fire. And the sky was darkened, and the air was filled with the rushing of wings; and the Sīmurgh descended and spoke to Zāl. And Zāl told her of all that had passed, and that Rustam was wounded near to death; and Rakhsh also. Then, the Sīmurgh drew forth the arrows, and brushed their wounds with her feathers, and they were straightway healed. And she counselled Rustam to surrender to Isfandiyār, for it was decreed that whosoever should slay him must suffer in the world and also after death. But Rustam would not consent; and thereupon the Sīmurgh brought him to a tamarisk-tree, that grew in a garden, and bade him fashion an arrow with two points from the wood of the tamarisk, for only by such an arrow could Isfandiyār be wounded. And Rustam did according to her bidding.

But when it was morning Rustam sought to turn Isfandiyār from his purpose; but he would not hear him. So Rustam, when he saw that humbleness would not avail, strung his bow, and set the arrow of tamarisk thereon, and loosed it at the forehead of Isfandiyār. And it struck him in the eyes, so that he fell from his horse.

And as Isfandiyār was dying, he forgave Rustam, and paid him honour; and prayed of him that he would rear his son Bahman, so that he might keep the name of Isfandiyār alive, and come to rule over Īrān in his stead.

And Rustam promised to cherish Bahman. And Isfandiyār died, and Rustam sent his body to Īrān with all honour. And all Īrān lamented for Isfandiyār. But Bahman remained behind in Zābulistān; and afterwards he ascended the throne of the Shāh.

[There are two impressive illustrations of the duel between Rustam and Isfandiyār. The first represents the battle on the first day (Plate 17). The broken spears are seen on the ground, while the champions fight on with sword and mace.

The scene of the shooting of Isfandiyār with the double-pointed arrow (Plate 18) has already been mentioned in connexion with the inscription, bearing the name of Muhammad Jūkī, on Rustam's imposing banner.[1] The setting for the final scene of the great tragedy is eerie and awe-inspiring, and strange faces are suggested in the high grey-green line of rocks behind the arena. The sky is golden, the ground green and buff.]

The account of the death of Rustam, foretold by the Sīmurgh, follows close on that of Isfandiyār. Rustam is betrayed by his brother, Shaghād, who traps him in a pit lined with spears and lances, on which Rustam and Rakhsh are both impaled. Rustam, however, before he dies, manages to slay his murderer in a final exploit of combined guile and strength.

Rustam's death occurs towards the end of the Kaianian epoch. Bahman is succeeded by his wife (who is also, according to Magian usage, his daughter) Humāy, who casts away her son Dārāb in an ark. He is, however, finally recognized by his mother, who abdicates in his favour.

It is with Dārāb that the definitely mythical part of the *Shāh-Nāmah* ends, and with his son Dārā (Darius Codomanus) and the story of his conquest by Sikandar (Alexander the Great) that history begins to take its place, though in a strangely distorted form. The Alexander story is one of the great curiosities of literature. The unhistorical part of Firdausī's account is taken from the monstrous crop of

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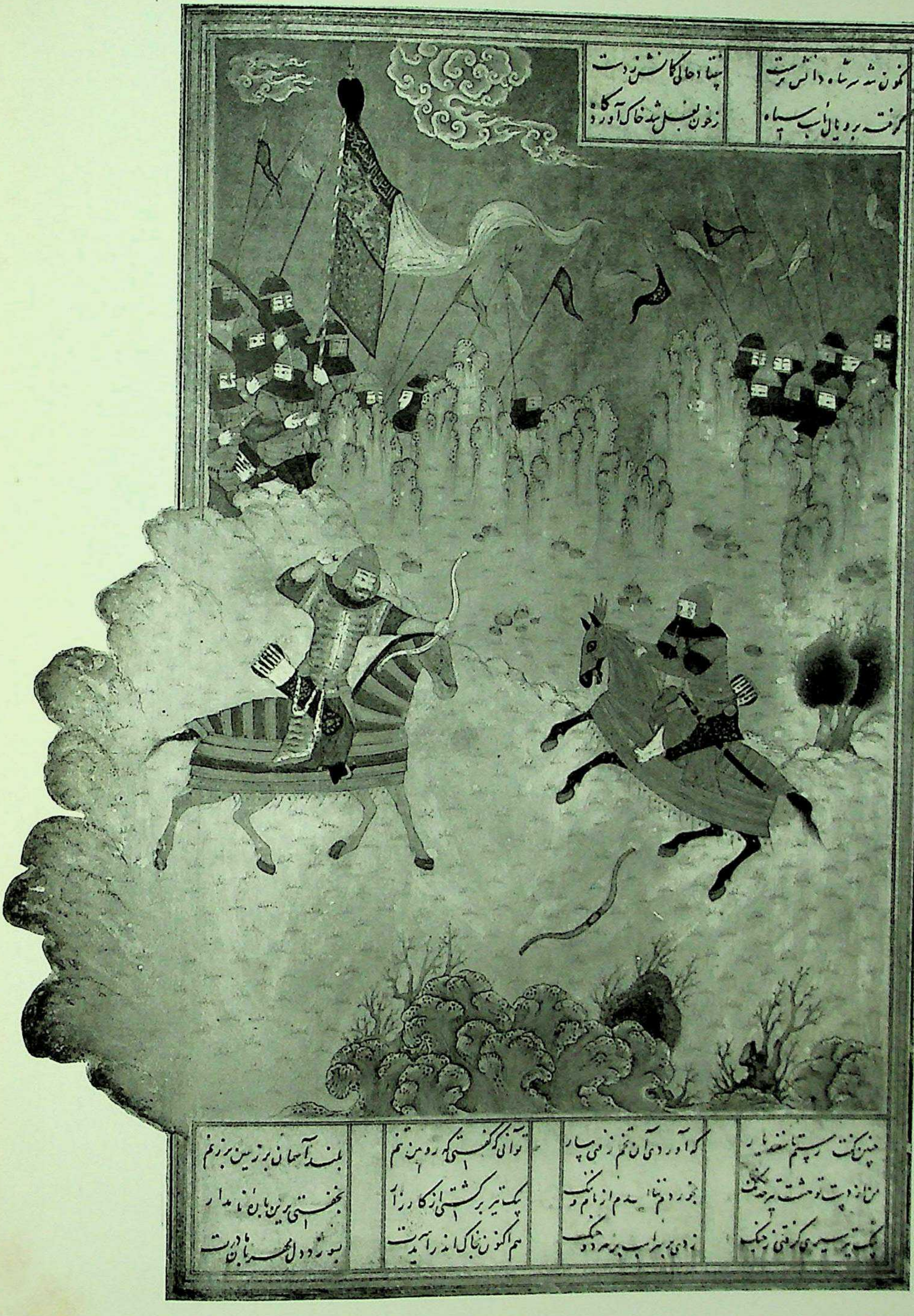
[1] See page 1.

XVIII. RUSTAM SHOOTS ISFANDIYĀR IN THE EYES


کنون شد سر شاه دانش پرست
گرفته بر و یال اسب سیاه
چنان داد حالی کاش ز دست
ز خون لعل شد خاک آوردگاه
چنین گفت رستم بشنفتار
من از دست تو دشت بر جنگ
یک تیر سیه کرفتی ز جنگ
کرا آوردی آن تخم زبی چار
بخوردم تها سم از نام و ننگ
ز دین بر اسب بر ... ننگ
توانی گرفتی که رومی تهم
یک تیر برگشتی از کارزار
هم اکنون نباک اندر آید ست
بلند آسمان بر زمین بر زنم
بگفتی برین بار نامدار
بسوزد دل مهربان درست

strange legends which began to spring up in Alexander's lifetime, and grew with the centuries. The most interesting feature of the Persian form of the story is the ingenious manner in which the Macedonian conqueror of Persia is converted into a Persian.

It was impossible to ignore Alexander, but it was possible, with Persian ingenuity, to adopt him.

¶ *Dārā and Sikandar*

In the days when Dārāb was Shāh, the land of Īrān prospered exceedingly; and ambassadors from every country came and did homage to the Shāh. And Dārāb defeated the hosts of the Arabs, and proceeded against the land of Rūm, and fought two battles with Failakūs, the king of Rūm, and put Failakūs and all his army to flight. And Dārāb the Shāh exacted a great tribute from Failakūs, and took his daughter to wife; and he bore her to Īrān, and set the crown of royalty upon her head.

But in time the Shāh came to hate the Queen, and sent her back to Failakūs her father. Now the Queen was with child at the time, but told it to no one. And when her child was born she called him Sikandar, and Caesar cherished him; and all the people considered him as Caesar's son. And the child waxed strong, and excelled in learning and all manly accomplishments.

Now when the mother of Sikandar was returned to Rūm, Dārāb took another damsel to wife, and she bore him a son; and he named the son Dārā.

And in course of time Dārāb the Shāh died, and Dārā ruled over Īrān in his place. Then afterwards Failakūs died also, and his grandson Sikandar succeeded him. Now in all the affairs of government he took counsel of the sage Aristātālis,[1] and he ruled the land wisely.

But Dārā sent to Sikandar to ask him for the tribute, and Sikandar refused to pay it to the Shāh. Then Sikandar assembled his armies, and prepared them for war. And he marched into Egypt, and conquered it; and prepared to invade Īrān also. And Dārā likewise made ready his host. But Sikandar disguised himself, and went as an envoy to the camp of Dārā, and spied out the dispositions of the army, and returned.

And the next day the armies fought together, and the host of Dārā was driven back. And he rallied his fighting men, and contended with Sikandar in another battle, and again he and his army were put to flight. And they fought yet a third time, and a third time the Iranians were worsted. Then Dārā fled away after the battle, and he wrote a letter to Sikandar, and offered to send him all the treasures of Gushtāsp and Isfandiyār, and to aid him in all his wars. And Sikandar, when he had read the letter, said that he would make peace with Dārā, and would refrain from harming any of the people of Īrān.

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[1] Aristotle.

Yet Dārā was ashamed, and repented of his promise, and sent to Fūr of Hind for help. And when Sikandar knew of it he led out his host from Istakhr. And the warriors of Dārā were wearied of fighting, and the chiefs of the army prayed for quarter from their adversaries. And Dārā fled away with three hundred of his nobles. Now among them were two ministers, that plotted against Dārā, for they saw that his star was set. And they stabbed him, and went before Sikandar and told him of it, for they hoped that he would reward them for ridding him of his enemy. Then Sikandar was wroth, and came to Dārā, and found him dying; and he dismounted, and took Dārā's head on his knees, and wept over him. And Dārā prayed Sikandar to protect his children, and to take his daughter to wife, and to guard the faith of Zardusht; and Sikandar promised to do all that he asked.

And when Dārā was dead Sikandar hanged those ministers, and ascended the throne of Īrān in the place of Dārā his brother.

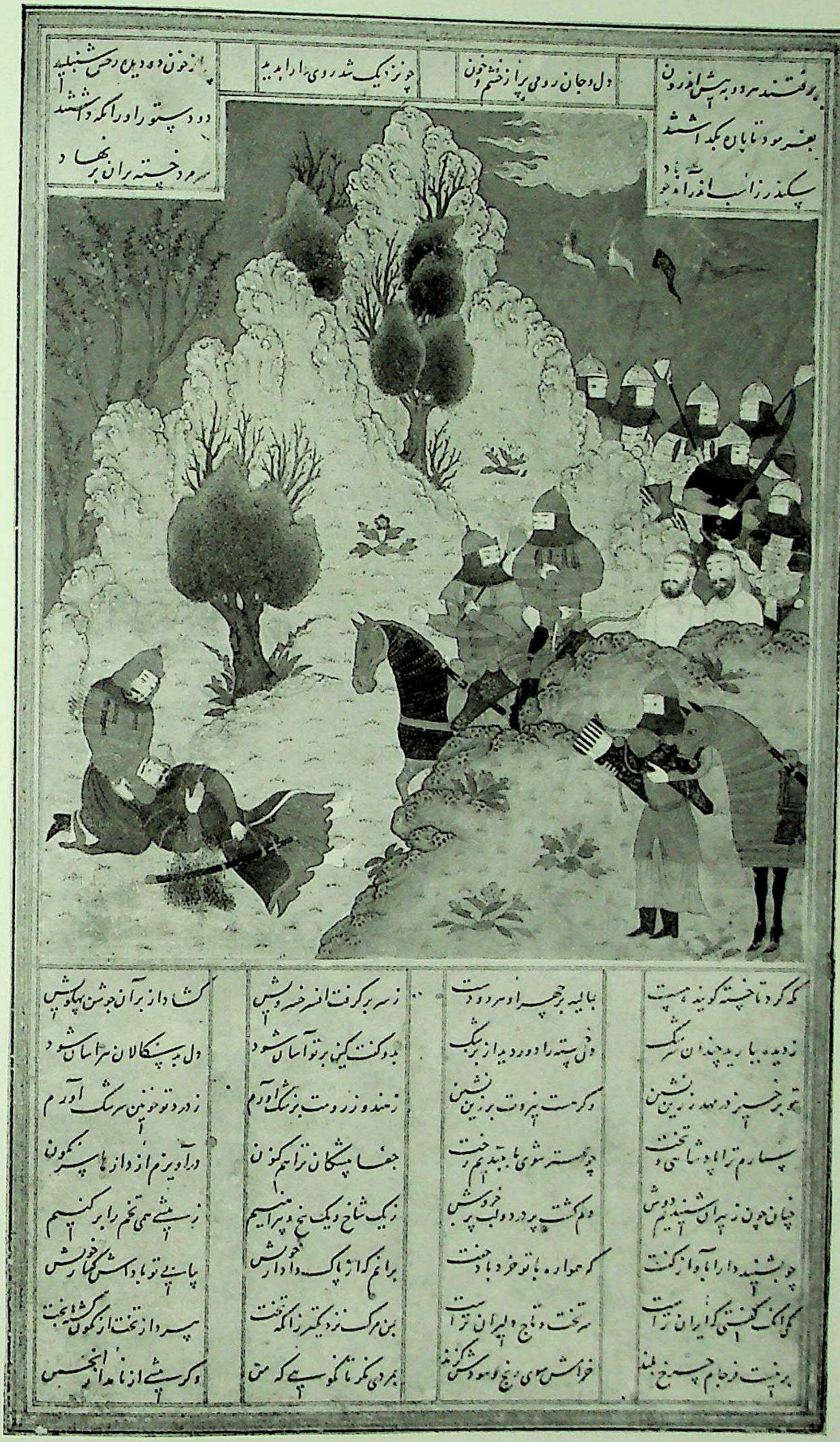
[The well-known scene of Dārā's death is the subject of Plate 19. The picture is a glorious harmony of variegated colours. The leading horseman is particularly well drawn.]

Firdausī next proceeds to tell, at considerable length, of Alexander's strange adventures and wanderings. The five and a half centuries between Alexander's death and the beginning of the Sasanian period (323 B.C. to A.D. 226) are, on the contrary, almost ignored in the poem, for the Seleukids and the hated Parthians or Ashkanians find no place in Iranian legend. With the Sasanians, the representatives of the might and glory of pre-Islamic Persia, the ancient glamour is revived, and the continuity with the mythical Kaianians is maintained by the tradition that Sāsān, the progenitor of the dynasty, was a son of Dārā.

Sāsān, according to Firdausī, flees before the invading army of Sikandar and becomes a shepherd, and his descendant Ardashīr (who is also the grandson of Pāpak, ruler of Pars) is the founder of the Sasanian dynasty. With the long story of the twenty-nine kings of this dynasty his epic is brought up to the Muhammadan conquest of the seventh century.

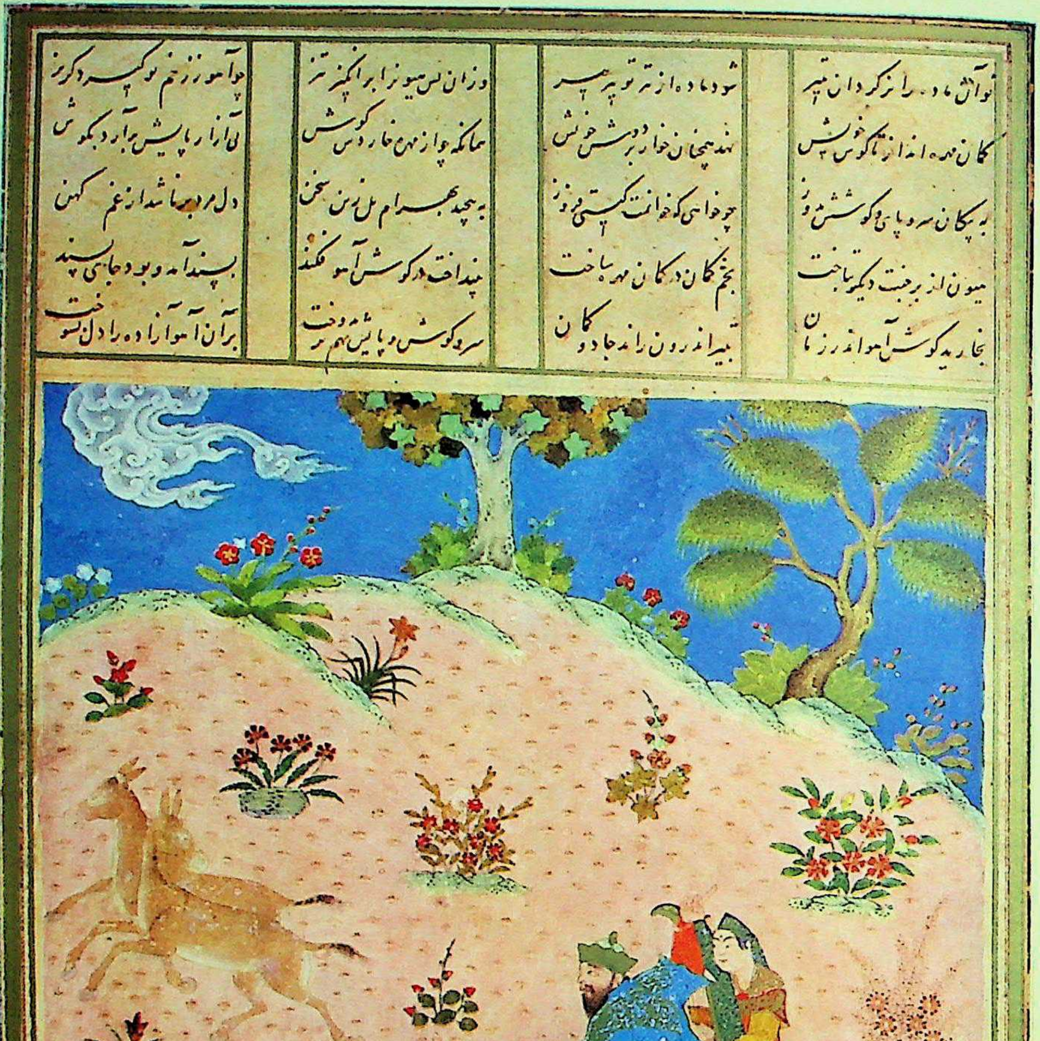
[The incident that is illustrated in Plate 20 is related of the celebrated Bahrām Gūr ('Bahram, that great Hunter'), son of Yazdigird, twelfth of the Sasanian Shāhs. The historical Bahrām was a notable character, distinguished for his military achievements against the White Huns, but best remembered for his love of sport and his personal interest in the life and welfare of his subjects. He was given the name of 'Gūr' from his devotion to hunting the *gūr*, or wild ass.]

XIX. SIKANDAR AND THE DYING DĀRĀ



برفتند هر دو به پیش اندرون دل و جان رومی پر از خشم و خون
چو نزدیک شد روی دارا بدید پر از خون دو دیده رخش شنبلید
بفرمود تا پاسبان بگذاشتند دو دستور او را نگه داشتند
سکندر ز اسب اندر آمد چو باد سر مرد خسته به ران برنهاد

نگه کرد تا خسته گوینده هست بمالید بر چهر او هر دو دست
ز سر برگرفت افسر خسروش گشاد از بر آن جوشن پهلوش
ز دیده ببارید چندان سرشک وی خسته را دور دید از پزشک
بدو گفت کین بر تو آسان شود دل بدسگالان هراسان شود
تو برخیز و در مهد زرین نشین وگر هست نیروت بر زین نشین
ز هند و ز رومت پزشک آورم ز درد تو خونین سرشک آورم
سپارم ترا پادشاهی و تخت چو بهتر شوی ما ببندیم رخت
جفا پیشگان ترا هم کنون درآویزم از دارها سرنگون
چنان چون ز پیران شنیدیم دوش دلم گشت پر درد و لب پر خروش
ز یک شاخ و یک بیخ و پیراهنیم ز بیشی همی تخم را بر کنیم
چو بشنید دارا به آواز گفت که همواره با تو خرد باد جفت
بر آنم که از پاک دادار خویش بیابی تو پاداش گفتار خویش
یکی آنکه گفتی که ایران تراست سر تخت و تاج دلیران تراست
بمن مرگ نزدیکتر زانکه تخت سپرد از تخت از نگون گشته بخت
برینست فرجام چرخ بلند خراشش همه رنج و سودش گزند
بمردی مکن تا نگویی که من وگر بیشی از نامدار انجمن



تو آن ماده را نره گردان به تیر
شود ماده از تیر تو پیر سر
وزان پس هیون را برانگیز تیز
چو آهو ز زخم تو گیرد گریز
کمان مهره انداز تا گوش خویش
نهد همچنان خوار بر دوش خویش
همانگه چو از مهره خارد دو گوش
که آزار پایش برآرد بگوش
به پیکان سر و پای و گوشش بدوز
چو خواهی که خوانمت گیتی فروز
بپیچید بهرام ازین زن سخن
دل مرد برنا شد از غم کهن
هیون اندر آن جست دیگر بتاخت
بخم کمان در کمان مهره ساخت
بینداخت در گوش آهو فکند
بپسند آمد و بود جای پسند
بخارید گوش آهو اندر زمان
به تیر اندرون راند جادو کمان
سر و گوش و پایش بهم بر بدوخت
بر آن آهو آزاده را دل بسوخت

XX. BAHRĀM GŪR AND ĀZĀDAH AT THE CHASE

¶ *The Story of Bahrām Gūr and the Damsel Āzādah*

When Yazdigird sat upon the throne of Īrān, a child was born to him whom he named Bahrām.

And the Shāh sent Bahrām to Arabia, to Munzir the Arab, that he might be trained in all princely ways. And the prince quickly became proficient in learning, and in polo, and hawking, and riding. But chiefly he loved to chase the deer and the wild asses. Now on a certain day he went to the chase with Āzādah, a Rūman damsel, who was his favourite. And she sat behind him on his dromedary, and carried her lute in her hands. And Bahrām espied a buck with its doe, and asked Āzādah, 'Which of them shall I shoot?' Āzādah told him, 'Men do not fight with deer, to kill them. But shoot in such wise that the buck become a doe, and the doe a buck. And after that shoot at a deer, and transfix with one arrow its ear and its foot.' Then Bahrām loosed an arrow at the buck, and the arrow carried away its horns; and with two more shafts he furnished the doe with arrows for horns. And again he aimed an arrow at the ear of the buck, so that it grazed it, and it raised its foot to scratch its ear. Then straightway he sent another arrow and pinned the foot and ear together. But Āzādah was vexed, and said to Bahrām that none but Āhriman could work such magic.

Then Bahrām flung her from the saddle, and rode the dromedary so that he trampled on her and she died. But afterwards he would no more suffer damsels to go with him to the chase.

[The picture of Bahrām's second feat (Plate 20) is in an older tradition than most of the illustrations in this manuscript; the motive, moreover, is one of the oldest, as well as the commonest, in Persian painting. It is found in Sasanian silver work and also in the twelfth-century pottery of Ray.]

The ruthlessness of Firdausī's version of the story is absent from Nizāmī's later one, in the *Haft Paikar,* according to which the maiden Fitnah is not actually put to death, and subsequently wins back Bahrām's favour by an ingenious stratagem.

¶ *Qubād*

The next incident connected with the Sasanian annals which is illustrated in the manuscript is concerned with the life of Qubād, a monarch who is best known as the father of Nūshīrwān, or Chosroes, the most famous of all the Sasanian Shāhs. Qubād's reign is also notable from his having become a convert to the communistic doctrines of the heretical Mazdak, of whom Gibbon remarks that he 'asserted the community of women, and the equality of mankind, whilst he appropriated the richest lands and most beautiful females to the use of his sectaries'. It was actually for favouring Mazdak, who was afterwards slain by Nūshīrwān, that Qubād was dethroned by his nobles. Firdausī's story is, however, as follows:

When Qubād the Shāh had reached years of discretion he became jealous of Sūfarai his minister. Now Sūfarai had set Qubād upon the throne of Īrān, and while the King was yet a lad all the authority had remained in his hands, and he had served the King faithfully. But the Iranians spoke evil of him to Qubād, and Qubād sent men to find Sūfarai, and gave an order that he should be slain. And when the Iranians knew that Sūfarai was dead they rose against Qubād the Shāh, and bound him in fetters, and set his brother Jāmāsp upon the throne in his place. And they handed over Qubād to Rizmihr the son of Sūfarai, to do with him according to his will. But Rizmihr made obeisance to Qubād, and would not take vengeance upon him nor harm him in any way, and swore to do his bidding.

And he released him from his fetters, and led him away secretly by night with five companions, so that they escaped to the land of the Haitalians. And the King of the Haitalians gave help to the Shāh, and lent him an army, so that he returned to Īrān, and won back from his enemies the kingdom that he had lost. And he handed over the authority to Rizmihr, and Rizmihr ordered the affairs of the kingdom with justice.

[The scene of the Shāh, with Rizmihr leading the way, riding stealthily from the palace towards the five companions is painted with considerable realism.

The pattern of the picture, the green rocks trespassing far into the margin, is a good example of the liberties with their space which the painters habitually took if the composition so required (Plate 21).]

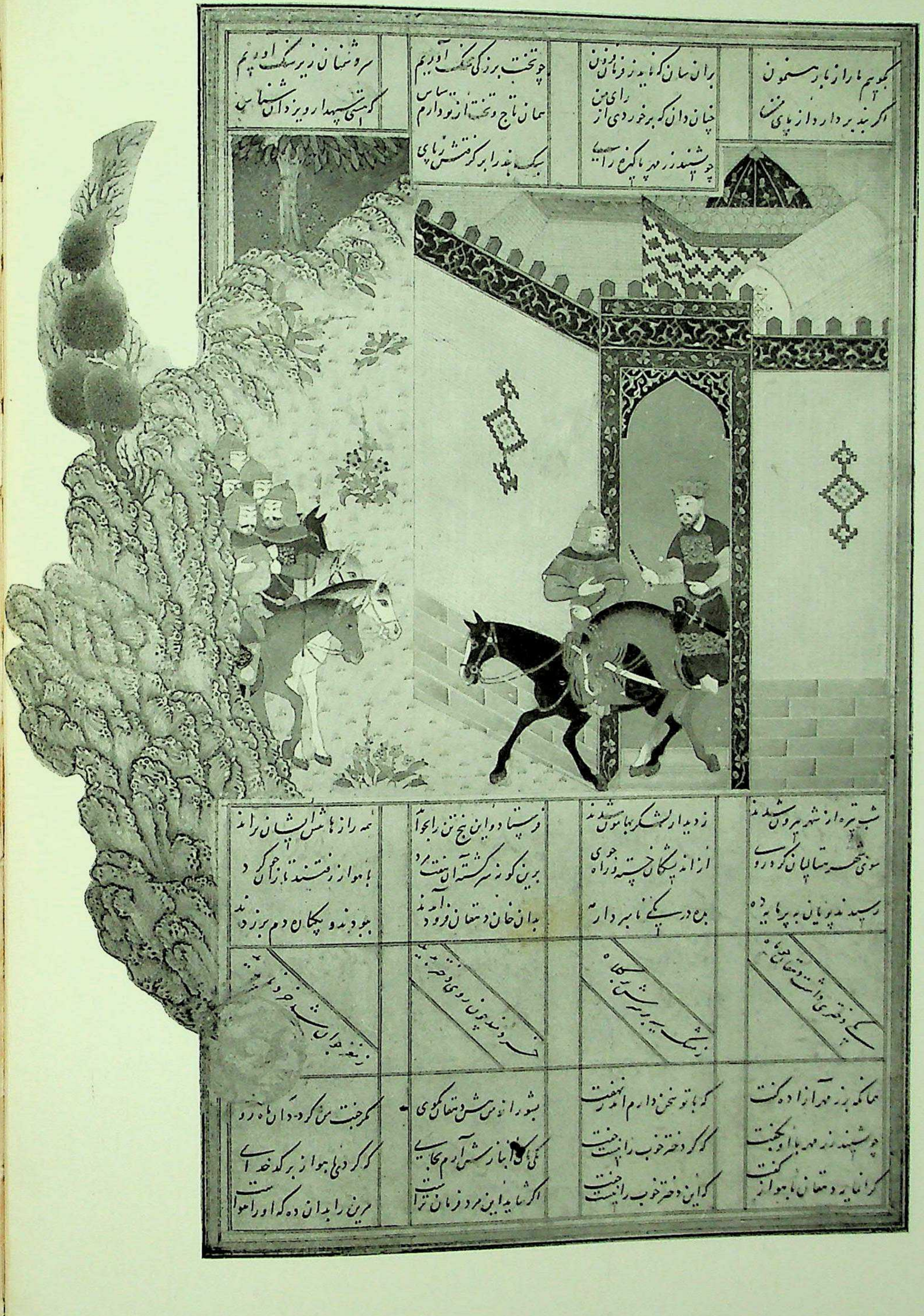
¶ *The Story of Gav and Talhand, and of the Invention of Chess*

The only connexion with the Sasanian Shāhs of the curious story that follows is that it is appended to Firdausī's account of the introduction of Chess from India into Persia during the reign of Nūshīrwān.

There was a certain King of Hind who ruled over a mighty Empire, from Kashmīr to the borders of Chīn. And when he died he left an infant son named Gav. And the Queen married the King's brother, who in his turn occupied the throne and ruled for a time as sovereign. And the Queen bore a son to him also, and they named him Talhand.

But when the boy was two years old, and Gav, his half-brother, was seven, the King sickened and died. And the great ones of the State chose the Queen to be the

XXI. QUBĀD ESCAPING FROM CAPTIVITY



ruler of the kingdom in his place. And she entrusted her sons to the charge of two prudent masters; and they grew in strength and learning. But when the princes were fully grown, they became envious of one another, and the armies were divided between them. Then the Queen summoned the wise men, and in their presence allotted an equal share of the kingdom to each of her sons. But both were offended at the decision, and neither was content with half the inheritance. So at last they gathered their hosts about them, and donned their armour, and mounted their elephants, and prepared for battle. Yet at the last Gav sent to Talhand his brother, and urged him to be content to share the throne, promising to regard him as his equal in all things.

But Talhand would not listen, for he claimed the whole realm for himself. And the messenger returned, and the heart of Gav was sad, for he had no pleasure in warring with his brother. So he sent again to Talhand, to beseech him to come to an understanding; but again Talhand returned him an angry answer. And next day when the sun rose they sounded the drums, and blew the clarions of war, and the two hosts deployed to right and left, and at the centres were the young princes with their ministers. But Gav ordered his army to hold back for a time, to watch the movements of Talhand's host; and Talhand attacked with great fury; and all day long the battle raged; till in the evening the army of Talhand was scattered.

But again Talhand assembled a host, and sent a bitter challenge to Gav. And the armies met together by the sea, and by agreement they dug a trench round about that place, and filled it with water, so that the army that was worsted might not be able to escape.

Then the princes mounted their elephants, and the armies fought together all that day; and the plain was filled with the bodies of the slain. And Talhand looked forth from his seat on his elephant and saw the earth covered with the dead; and the wind blew cold in his face, and weariness came upon him, for he saw no rest from fighting, and no hope of victory. And he swooned upon his golden saddle and died.

But when Gav heard of it he wept for his brother, for he was young. And he buried him with honour, in a coffin of gold and ivory and teak-wood. So they brought the news to the Queen-mother, and she burnt up her palace and all that she had, and set up a mighty pyre to burn herself, according to the custom of Hind. But Gav came to her and entreated her, and after a time her sorrow abated a little.

Then Gav held a council with his wise men, and they devised a plan to console the Queen his mother. They made a board of ebony, and squared it, in the likeness of the battle-field, and they traced on it a hundred squares, and constructed two armies of teak and ivory, both horse and foot. And in the centre of each was the

King, with his minister at his side, and next to each were two elephants, and beyond them two camels with their riders, and next were two horsemen, and at the ends of the line two rukhs. And they ordered the moves of these pieces on the board, so that each moved after a different manner. And when the King was hemmed in by foemen, and all escape was cut off according to the rules of the game, then it was ordered that he should die.[1]

And they showed the Queen the game that they had contrived, and in time, albeit her heart was ever sorrowing for Talhand, she found in it solace from her grief.

[In the picture the young Talhand is shown falling back dead in his golden seat. The illustration is the most ambitious, and one of the most successful, in the book. It is a crowded scene, full of the tumult and varied drama of battle—which is reflected in the fighting water-birds in the foreground (Plate 22).

The painting bears a resemblance to some of the illustrations attributed to Bihzād in the *Zafar-Nāmah* manuscript, now belonging to Mr. Robert Garrett, which was the subject of a monograph by the late Sir Thomas Arnold. 'Bihzadian', too, is the silhouette of rocks, trees, and birds against the golden sky.]

¶ *The Fight between Khusrau Parvīz and Bahrām Chūbīn*

Khusrau is better known as a hero of romance and the lover of the fair Shīrīn than as an historical character. Actually, he was the last great Sasanian king before the Muhammadan invasion, which took place thirteen years after his dethronement in 628. Bahrām Chūbīn was a powerful noble who, after being commander of the Shāh's armies, rebelled, and finally usurped the throne.

According to Firdausī Khusrau fled to Rūm, where he was welcomed and assisted by Caesar, and Caesar bestowed on him the hand of his daughter Maryam. Then Khusrau marched with his Rūman allies and met Bahrām in battle. On the first day the Rūman chieftain, Kūt, fought with Bahrām; but Bahrām clave him to the breast with his sword. Then the courage of the Rūmans was broken, and they were smitten by the army of Bahrām, so that Khusrau lost faith in them. So on the next day he commanded that the Rūmans should withdraw from the battle. Yet there were on the side of Khusrau certain paladins whom Bahrām had summoned to fight on his side, and he was angered when he saw them. Now Bahrām was riding upon a white elephant, terrible to behold. And he rode alone into the midst of the army of Khusrau. But Khusrau commanded his archers to direct their arrows against the

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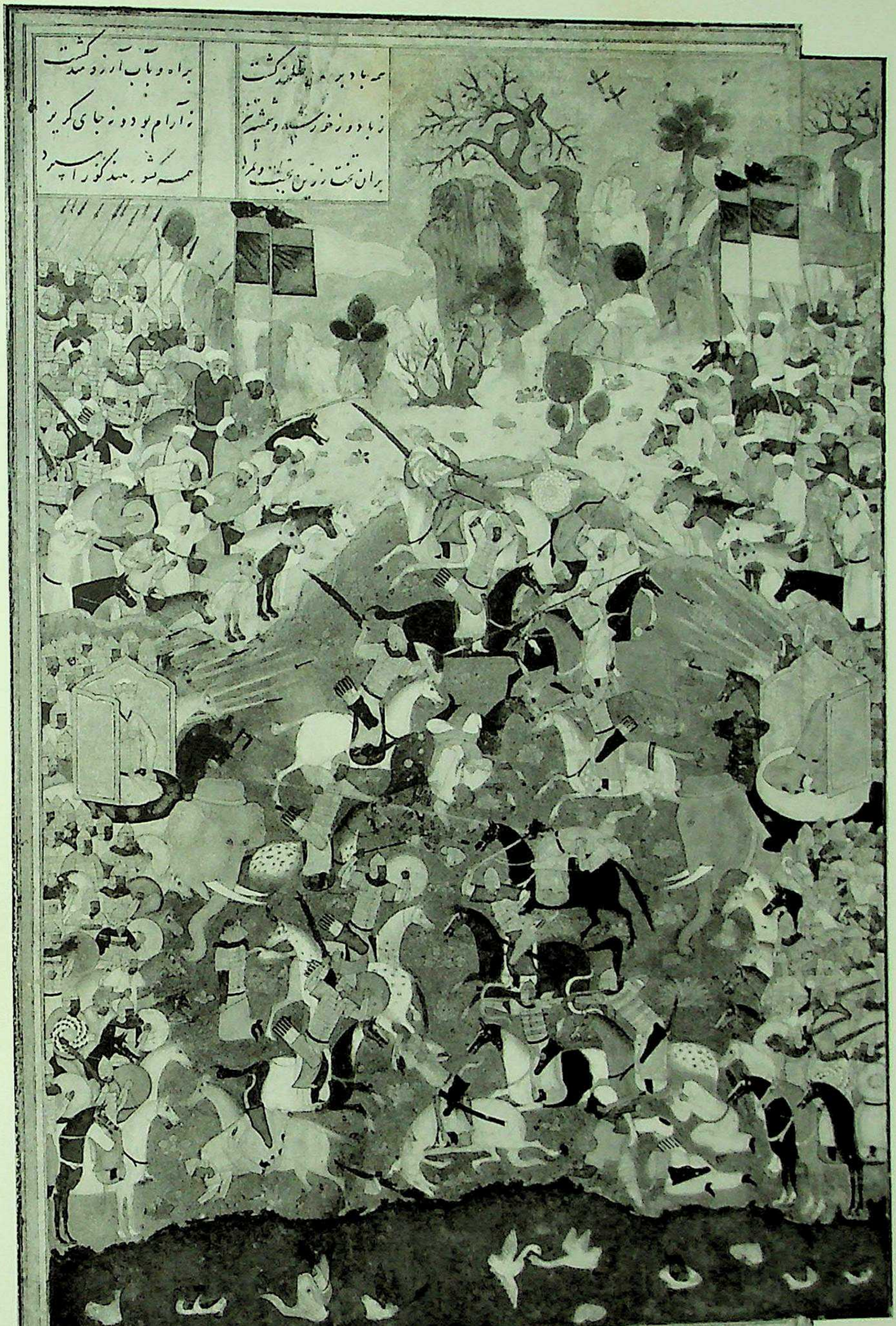
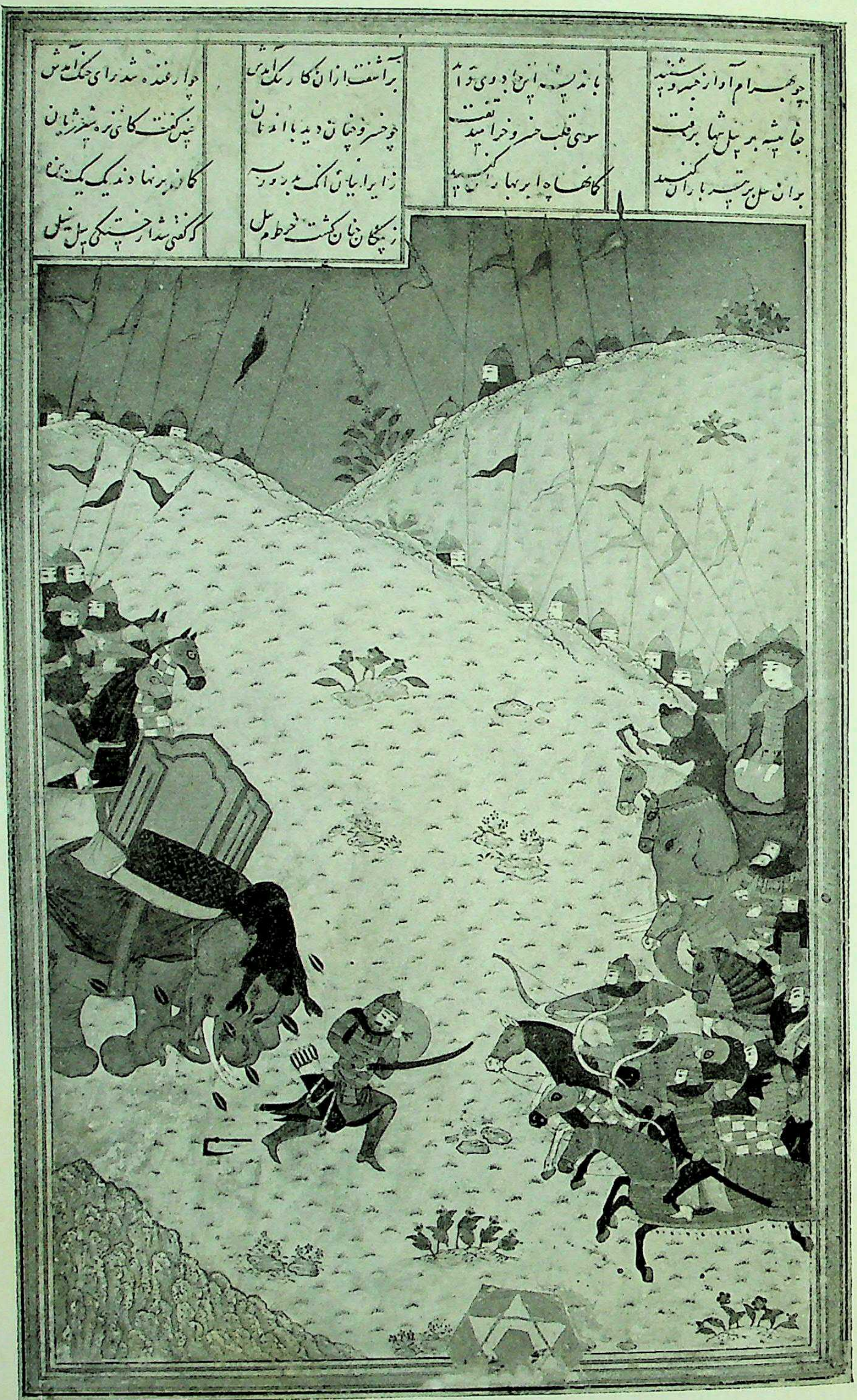
[1] Shāh-māt = checkmate.

XXII. THE ORIGIN OF CHESS. THE BATTLE BETWEEN GAV AND TALHAND


همه باد بر [illegible] گشت
براه و بآب آرزومند گشت
ز باد و ز خورشید و شمشیر تیز
نه آرام بود و نه جای گریز
بران تخت زرین [illegible]
همه کشور هند گورا سپرد



XXIII. BAHRĀM CHŪBĪN FIGHTS ON FOOT AFTER HIS ELEPHANT HAS BEEN BROUGHT DOWN

elephant, so that he failed. Then Bahrām went on foot into the midst of his enemies, bearing his buckler before him, and mowed them down with his sword; and afterwards, mounting on a horse, he rode against the place where the Shāh was seated, yet for a time he could not reach to him in the press. But afterwards Bahrām pursued Khusrau alone, for the bodyguard of the Shāh was scattered.

And Khusrau came to a steep place, and dismounted; and he began to climb up a path into the mountain, for there was no way of escape. And he called upon God to help him in his distress, for he feared that Bahrām would overtake him. Thereupon there appeared to him one garbed in green, and riding upon a white horse, and he took the Shāh by the hand, and rescued him. And when Khusrau questioned him he answered that he was Surūsh, the messenger of God.

And Bahrām saw it, and a trembling came upon him, for he knew that God was on the side of the Shāh.

And in the end the army of Bahrām was overthrown.

[The illustration showing Bahrām's gallant attack on foot after his elephant has fallen (Plate 23) is another dramatic drawing. The armour, in silver and two tones of gold, is painted with extreme delicacy. Apart from this, there is little vivid colouring, and the sky is of a paler blue than in most of the other miniatures.]

¶ *The Death of Yazdigird*

The downfall of the Sasanian Empire, foretold, so it is said, by the Prophet himself in the days of Khusrau's prosperity, was accomplished during the reign of Khusrau's grandson, Yazdigird, with whose defeat by the Arab armies the story of ancient Persia comes to an end. The Islamic conquest was the most momentous event in Persian history, for with the fall of the Sasanian dynasty a mighty empire was reduced to a tributary province, while the replacement of the old Zoroastrianism by the new religion of Arabia brought about profound spiritual and cultural changes.

The story of Yazdigird's end, as Firdausī relates it, is as follows.

When the host of Yazdigird the Shāh had fled before the Arabs,[1] the Shāh departed to Khurasan, purposing to raise a new army; and he sent messages to all the chieftains, bidding them bring help. Now when the Shāh came to Tūs he was received by Mahvī of Sūr, who swore that he would protect him. Yet Mahvī plotted against Yazdigird, for he saw that he was helpless, and hoped to seize the throne for himself.

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[1] At the battle of Qādisiyyah.

Mahvī conspired with Bīzhan, a paladin of Samarqand, and Bīzhan, at his instigation, sent an army against the Shāh. And the Shāh trusted in the warriors of Mahvī, and advanced against the host of Samarqand; and he was in the centre of the host. Yet when the battle was joined they turned and left him. Then Yazdigird knew that Mahvī had betrayed him, yet he fought on valiantly alone for a time; but at length he perceived that valour was of no avail, when there was none to support him; and he fled upon his horse from the battle, while the Turkish horsemen pursued him.

Now the Shāh came upon a mill by the side of a canal; and he dismounted, and went and hid in the mill among some hay; and the horsemen came up and searched hither and thither, but could not find him. And in the morning the miller came and opened the door, and beheld a man sitting, like a lofty cypress, with brocaded garments, and a crown upon his head;

his eyes a stag's, his chest
And neck a lion's.

And he spoke with him, and promised to bring him food. But the miller was questioned by the soldiers, and they brought him to Mahvī, and Mahvī listened to his story, and guessed that Yazdigird was taken. Then he commanded the miller to slay him. But the Magians were angry, and told Mahvī that a Dīv had surely misled him, that he hoped to contend against the King of Kings, of the noble race of Sāsān; and that if he caused Yazdigird's death he would suffer in life and burn in hell fire.

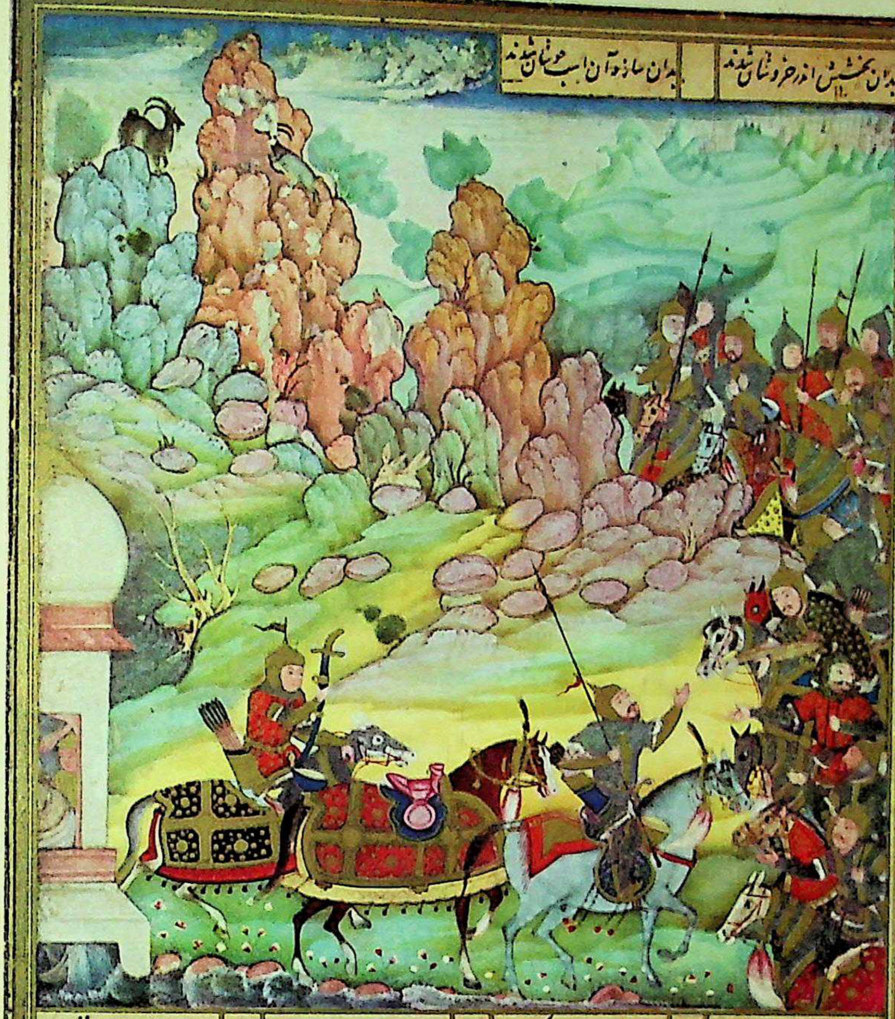
Yet Mahvī would not heed their words; and he commanded the miller to make no delay. And the miller went secretly and stabbed the Shāh with a dagger, so that he died. And the horsemen came and stripped him of his crown and robe, and his golden boots, and left him naked; and the miller cast his body into the stream.

But certain pious monks rescued the body, and cared for it; and they prepared a lofty tomb for Yazdigird the Shāh.

Then Mahvī of Sūr ascended the throne of the Shāhs; but Bīzhan made war upon him and captured him; and Bīzhan cut off his hands and feet, and his nose and ears, and commanded that he should be exposed to the heat of the sun till he died. And his sons also were burned upon a pyre. And the chieftains cursed Mahvī and all his race.

[The illustration (Plate 24), though not without its charm, is chiefly interesting as an example of the contrast between Persian and Indian painting methods, for the background and the mill have been entirely repainted by a Mughal artist.]

XXIV. YAZDIGIRD HIDING IN THE MILL



بدان بخشش اندر خروشان شدند
بدان ساز و آن اسب جوشان شدند

نهان شاه در خانهٔ آسیا
نشست از بر خشک لختی گیا
چنین است رسم سرای فریب
فرازش بلندست و پستش نشیب

جهاندار که بیدار شد بخت اوی
بگردون کشیدی زمین تخت اوی
کنون آسیا بایدش بهر
ز شهدش فراوان فزون بود زهر

چه بندی دل اندر سرای فسوس
بدو هر زمان بگوشش آمد بانگ کوس
ز بیشی خرد ریخته کور بخت
فرو دستی برآید که بربندد رخت

دلی پر ز بیم و ز دیده پر آب
بسی بود تا برکشید آفتاب

گشاد آن در آسیابان در آسیا
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ز موش و بنام و ز جوشنده کام
خورش از آن آسیا ساختی
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نشسته بر آن خاک بر مستمند
کئی تاج خسروی بر سرش
درفشان ز دیبای رومی برش

دو چشم گوزن و بر و یال شیر
شگفتی بماند از دیدن شیرگیر
دو پیکر یکی کفش زرین بپای
ز خوشاب و زر آستین قبای

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